

THE
CHRISTIAN
IN
Compleat Armour.
OR, A
TREATISE,

Of the Saints War against the Devil, wherein a
discovery is made of that grand enemy of God and his People,
in his Policies, Power, Seat of his Empire, Wickedness,
and chief design he hath against the Saints.

A
Magazin open'd
FROM

Whence the Christian is furnished with Spiritual
Armes for the Battel, help't on with his Armour, and
taught the use of his Weapon, together with the
happy issue of the whole War.

The Second PART.

By William Gurnal, *M. A.* of Eman. Coll. now Pastor of the
Church of Christ in Lavenham. Suffolk.

The third Edition.

Imprimatur, EDM. CALAMY.

LONDON, Printed for Ralph Smith, at the Bible in
Cornhil, near the Royal Exchange. 1663.

VALENTINE LAWFORD.

. 1770.



Frankford
9th Regiment (M.H.) V. Sanford.
15th June 1840

Sanford

1608/395 (1)

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CHRISTIAN



Complete

OF

THE

Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre
of Jerusalem, and the Knights of the Temple
of Solomon, as they are now called, in the
Kingdom of France, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Mary

1855

The Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre
of Jerusalem, and the Knights of the Temple
of Solomon, as they are now called, in the
Kingdom of France, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

By

The Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre
of Jerusalem, and the Knights of the Temple
of Solomon, as they are now called, in the
Kingdom of France, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

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Kingdom of France, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem.



To the
WORSHIPFUL
THOMAS DARCY Esq;
And
Mrs. SISILIA DARCY,
His Religious Consort, at *Kentwell-*
Hall, in Suffolk.

IF my Ministry be, or ever was a mercy to the souls of my dear People in *Lavenham*, they with me, have the more cause to bless God for Sir *Symonds D' Ewes*, your much honoured Father; who with such a noble freeness gave them their choice in setting me amongst them. And by whose favour (under God) I have many years enjoyed the royalty of fishing for souls in their stream. A priviledge, which my God (I hope) will enable me to value at a higher rate (how mercenary soever we are thought by many) than the temporal emoluments of the place. Some years are now past, since God was pleased (for our sins I fear) to take him from us, by whose death, and many other men

The Epistle Dedicatory.

The onely
daughter now
living of Sir
Symonds D^r
Eves Knight
Baronet.

of honour, that have their heads now laid with his among the clods; the consumptive body of this our Nation, hath lost so much of her best blood and spirits, as is seen in her pale face to this day. And now, this *Worthy Gentleman*, being removed beyond the tender of my homage, my obligations to him become payable to you both: Your *Lady* by descent in her fathers right, and your *self* by alliance in hers, may justly claim the debt, were it worth the challenging. But to save you the trouble, these lines are sent to make publick confession of the same. Indeed there are so many to witnesse it, that should I by a dishonest ingratitude have thought to conceal it; I should have but taken paines to put my self to shame before the world. I suppose it would not much please you, that my penne here should tell the world any thing of your Fathers Worth, with which they were so well acquainted, before he left it; And besides, you know, the unhappinesse of great favours is such, as brings their receivers under a suspicion of flattery, for that which in the mouth of a disoblighd person, would be counted true and modest. I shall therefore only say this, the more to provoke you both to a careful imitation of him. You have so fair a copie left you in the example of a Worthy and Religious Father (a happinesse not over common among the children of great ones) that to scribe after it, would be much to your dishonour. Both your educations have been with the greatest advantage for piety. And blessed be God, we see, that the Religious principles, with which so early you were sown, did not fall upon dead earth. The Name of Religion is not vile, or contemptible to you, as to many of your rank it is; who have upon its beautiful face with



The Epistle Dedicatory.

a carnal eye, through a crackt glasse (the scandals I mean of broken Professours) can find no comelinenesse for which they should desire it; yea, have very unlovely and deformed images framed of it in their thoughts. The worship of God is not proscribed your family, as in the houses of many great ones, who it seems, think God himself too mean company for them; and count it a greater disgrace to have the Bible used in their Parlour, than Cards and Dice.

They were not the most unwelcome guests to your house, that bring God along with them, and desire to leave something of God behind them. You begin well, *Noble Friends*, blessed be God for this Religious Spring putting forth in your youth. Allow me (I pray) the liberty to love you freely; and now my penne is serving you, to do it faithfully. You are in a very good way; like true travellers, keep it, and let none hinder you in your journey to heaven. Take heed; this morning Sun, that looks out so hopefully, to the joy of all that know and love you, shut not up with foul weather, in the evening of your dayes. If you were got many miles further on your journey than you are, yet this counsel would not come too late, or be needlesse. Apostacie is not more incident to our natures, than breaches made on early profession are dangerous. When a fair morning afterwards turns to rain, there is lesse hope of its clearing up, than if it had begun foul. O labour therefore to be more in earnest for God, and Heaven, every day than other. Beware of falling into a consumption in the solid parts of godlinesse, which may be, and yet a fresh set colour appear on the face.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

face of profession. Borrow as much time as you can for communion with God, and communing with your own hearts in secret. If such as you can find no time, or spare but little for this work, who then may? Labour to get a greater mastery of your estate, and love of the world, that you may be able to command it for God, ever counting a large heart, a mercy greater than a large purse. Value your selves by your inheritance in the other world, and not by your honour and riches in this: You may (as Saints) call that your own; but this, alas, is only your *Masters Cash* in your hand, for the disbursement of which, you must account, and that to a penny. Be abundant in the acts of *Charity*, and let the *Papists* know, that good works will grow on *Protestants ground*, where there is no hope of merit allowed to water them. Be not much in that company, that will neither give, nor take any good.

You will find, *Honoured friends*, that Religion is a serious businesse, and will require your wisest thoughts, and best care to manage it well. There is an unhappy proverb (which the formal Courtship, rather than cordial friendship, that Religion finds among many great personages, hath occasioned,) viz. *A little Religion goes a great way amongst great ones*; whereas in all reason, that which may passe for great Religion among inferiours, should be thought little by those that are mounted higher on the hill of honour, because they owe more service to God, and the Devil owes more spite to them. Their temptations are greater, not only in more danger to fall, but in falling also, because of the height they fall from. The good Lord help you to belie this proverb more and more, that you may

The Epistle Dedicatory.

may convince the world; greatnesse, and goodnesse, are not so irreconcilable, but may be perswaded to dwell in one house, yea, lie in one bosome. This discourse, that I here humbly present to your hands (a little fruit of my labours, that grew in your Fathers soil.) If you water it with prayer in the reading of it, may (I hope) through Gods blessing, give encouragement, and also reach some help to you in the work; which that it may do, shall be the prayer

Of your humble servant

in the Lord,

Lavenham, Octob. 1657.

William Gurnall.

may converse the world; greenly, and greenly,
are not to unbecomely, but may be permitted to
dwell in one house; yet, he in one house. This
dispute, that I have humbly offered to your
(a little hint of my modest, that I am in your
then fall. If you water it with prayer in the
ing of it, may (I hope) through Gods blessing, give
encouragement, and this reach to help to you
the work; which I may do, shall be the prayer.

Of the world, I am

And I am

London, Oct. 10, 1792

Wm. Gurnall



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THE
CHRISTIAN
IN
Compleat Armour.

Part. 2.

EPHES 6. 14.

[Stand therefore and]

THe Apostle had laid down in general, *ven. 13.* what Armour the Christian Souldier must use, *Armour of God.* Now lest any should stamp divinity upon what is humane, and make bold to set Gods Name on their counterfeit ware, calling that Armour of God, which comes out of their private forge (as Papists, and many carnal Protestants also do, who invent weapons to fight the Devil with, that never came into Gods heart to appoint.) He therefore comes more particularly to shew what this whole Armour of God is, describing it piece by piece, which together make up the compleat suit, and every way furnish the Christian to take the Field against this his enemy. We shall handle them in that order we finde them here laid by the Apostle. Only something would briefly be first said to the posture given us in charge, as that which we are to observe in the use of every piece, and therefore prefix to all, because it hath influence into all. The posture lies in these words, *Stand therefore, sure, Stand.* This word is the same with the last in the precedent *v.* But neither in the same mood, nor tense: There put for victory and triumph

(B)

triumph when the war is done, here for the Christians posture in the fight, and in order to it. It is a military expression, a word of command that Captains use upon different occasions to their Soldiers, and so imports several duties that are required at the Christians hands.



CHAP. I.

Wherein is briefly shewed the necessity of resisting Satans temptations, with the danger of yielding to them.

1.

First, *to stand*, is opposed to a cowardly flight from, or treacherous yielding to the enemy. When a Captain sees his men begin to shrink, and perceives some disposition in them to flee or yield, then he bids *stand*, that is, stand manfully to it, and make good your ground against the enemy; by a valiant receiving his charge, and repelling his force. The word taken thus, points at a suitable duty incumbent on the Christian, which take in this note.

Note.

Satan in his temptations is stoutly to be resisted, not in any wise yielded unto.

Reas. 1.

Reas. 1. The command is expresse for it, *1 Pet. 5. 9. Whom resist steadfast in the faith.* Set your selves in battel against him, as the word imports, fight him when ever he comes. Souldiers must keep close to their Commission, whatever comes on it. When *Joab* sent *Oriah* to stand in the fore-front of the battel, in the face of death it self, he could not but see his danger, yet he disputes not the matter with his General; obey he must, though he loses his life upon the place. Cowardise and disobedience to the Leaders command, are counted among the *Turks*, the most damning finnes, and shall they be thought peccadilloes, little ones by us that have Christ for our Captain to serve, and sinne, and the Diuel for enemies to fight? To resist some temptations may cost us dear. *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood* (saith the Apostle) *striving against sin*; Heb. 12. 4. implying it may come to that, and if it should, it alters not the

the case, nor gives a dispensation to shift for our selves, by choosing to sinne, rather than to suffer. The *Roman* Captain said it was necessary to faile, not to live; and shall a Christian be afraid of his duty, when it is attended with outward hazard? The Souldier carries his Princes honour into the Field with him, and so doth the Christian his Gods; when ever he is call'd to contest with any temptation: Now it will be seen at what rate he values his honour. *David's* subjects valued him worth ten thousands of their lives, and therefore would die every man of them, rather than hazard him; oh how unworthy is it then to expose the Name of God to reproach, rather than our selves to a little scome, temporal losse or trouble? It was *Pompeys* boast, that at a word or nod of his, he could make his Souldiers creep up the steepest Rock on their hands and knees, though they were knockt down as fast as they went up. Truly, God is not prodigal of the blood of his servants, yet sometimes he tries their loyalty in hard services, and sharp temptations, that he may from their faithfulness to him, and holy stoutness in their sufferings for him, triumph over Satan, who was so impudent, as to ~~kill~~ God, that one of his choicest servants did but serve himself in serving of him, doth *Job* fear God for nought? as if when any sharp encounter came, he would turn head, and rather curse God, than submit to him; and therefore we finde the Lord glorying over Satan, *Job* 2. 2. *Still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him*; as if the Lord had said, what doest think now Satan? hath not *Job* proved thee a loud liar? I have some servants thou seest that will serve me without a bribe, that will hold fast their integrity, when they can hold fast nothing else. Thou hast got away his estate, servants and children, and yet he stands his ground, and thou hast not got thy will of him, nor his integrity from him.

2. God furnisheth us with Armour for this end, that we should stand it out valiantly, and not yield to Satan tempting. To deliver up a Castle into an enemies hand, when 'tis well provided with ammunition to defend it, is shameful and unworthy of such a trust. This makes the Christians sinne more dishonourable than anothers, because he is better appointed

to make resistance. Take a gracelesse soul, when solicited (suppose) to a sinne that promisseth carnal pleasure or profit, 'tis no great wonder that he yields at first summons, and delivers up himself prisoner to Satan : The poor wretch, alas, hath no Armour on to repel the motion. He tastes no sweetnesse in Christ ; what marvel is it, if his hungry soul for want of better food, falls on board upon the Devils chear ? that he, who hath no hope of another world, be made to shank and prole to get some of this ? The Goat (we say) must browse where she is tied, and the sinner feed on earth and earthly things, to which he is staked down by his carnal heart. But the Christian hath a hope in his bosome of another guesse glory than this pedling world can pretend to ; yea, a faith that is able to entertain him at present with some of heavens joyes, it being the nature of that grace to give existence to the good things of the promise : this helmet on, and shield lift up, would keep off a whole showre of such arrows from hurting the Christian. God hath reason to take it the worse at his hands to yield ; that might have stood, would he but have made use of those graces which God hath given him for his defence, or called in help from heaven to his succour. *Hast thou eaten (saith God to Adam) of the Tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat ?* Gen. 3. The accent lies in *Thou*. It was not sure for hunger, thou hadst a whole Paradise before thee ; hast thou eaten, that wert provided so well to have withstood him ? Hast thou, may God say to the Christian, eaten of the Devils dainties who hast a key to go to my cup-board ? does thy heavenly Father keep so starv'd a House, that the Devils Scrapps will go downe with thee ?

3-

Thirdly, the Christians safety lies in resisting. All the Armour here provided is to defend the Christian fighting, none to secure him flying. Stand, and the day is ours ; Fly or yield, and all is lost. Great Captains to make their Souldiers more resolute, do sometimes cut off all hope of a safe retreat to them that run away : Thus the *Norman Conquerour* as soon as his men were set on *English* shore, sent away his ships in their sight, that they might resolve to fight or dye. God takes away all thought of safety to the Coward. Not a piece

X to be found for the back in all Gods Armoury. Stand, and the bullets light all on your Armour; Flye, and they enter into your hearts. 'Tis a terrible place, *Heb. 10. 38. The just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.* He that stands to it believingly comes off with his life; but he that recoyles, and runnes from his colours, as the word *ὑποσχωμαι* imports; God will have no pleasure in him, except it be in the just execution of his wrath on him. And doth he not make a sad change, that from fighting against Satan, engageth God as an enemy against him? There is comfort in striving against sinne and Satan, though to blood; but none to lie sweating under the fiery indignation of a revenging God. What Satan layes on, God can take off; but who can ease, if God layes on? What man would not rather die in the Field fighting for his prince; than on a Scaffold by the Axe, for Cowardize or Treachery?

Fourthly, the enemy we have to do withal is such as is only to be dealt with by resisting. God is an enemy that is overcome by yielding, the Diuel onely by force of Armes.

First, he is a cowardly enemy; though he sets a bold face on it in tempting, he carries a fearful heart in his breast. The work is naught he goes about; and as a thief is afraid of every light he sees, or noise he hears in the house he would rob; so Satan is discouraged where he findes the soul waking, and in any posture to oppose him. He fears thee (Christian) more than thou needest him. *Iesus I know, and Paul I know;* (said the Diuel) *Acts 19. 15.* That is, I know them to my shame; they have both put me to flight; and if ye were such as they, I should fear you also. Believe it soul, he trembles at thy faith; put it forth in prayer to call for help to heaven against him; and exert it vigorously by rejecting the motions he makes, and thou shalt see him runne. Did Souldiers in a Castle know that their enemies besieging them were in a distracted condition, and would certainly upon their sallying out, break up, and flie away, what metal and courage would this fill them withal? The Spirit of God (who knows well enough how squares go in the Devils camp) sends

this intelligence unto every [son] that is beleaguered by his temptations, *1am. 4. 8. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.* He cannot hurt us without our leave. The Devil is not so good a drawer, but when he finds it comes not, the soul yields not, his heart then failes him, at least for the present, as in Christs combats, 'tis said, *he departed from him for a season.* When the Devil continues long the same suit, 'tis to be feared, that person though he hath not fully promised him, yet he hath not given him a peremptory denial. He is a suitor that listens for something to drop from the creature that may encourage him to prosecute his motion, no way to be rid of him, but to shut the door upon him, and deny all discourse with him, which prompts to the second Character.

2.

2. He is an encroaching enemy, and therefore to be resisted. *Let not the Sunne go down upon your wrath* (saith the Apostle) *neither give place to the Devil.* Eph. 4. 26. as souldiers by cowardly leaving some out-work they are set to defend, give place to their enemy who enters the same, and from thence doth more easily shoot into the City than he could before. Thus yielding in one temptation, we let the Devil into our trench, and give him a fair advantage to do us the more mischief. The angry man while he is raging and raving, thinks, may be, no more; but to ease his passion by disgorging it in some bitter keene words, but alas while his fury and wrath is falling out at the portal of his lips, the Devil finding the door open, enters and hurries him further than he dreamt of. We have not to do with an *Hannibal*, who though a great sword-man, yet wanted the Art of following and improving the advantages his victories gave him, but with a cunning Devil that will easily lose no ground he gets; our best way therefore is to give him no hand-hold, not so much as to come near the door where sin dwells, least we be hooked in; if we mean not to be burnt, let us not walk upon the coales of temptation; if not to be tand, let us not stand where the Sun lies, They sure forget what an insinuating wrigling nature this Serpent hath, that dare yield to him in something, and make us believe they will not in another; who will sit in the company of drunkards, frequent the places where the sin is committed, and yet pretend they mean not to be such; that will prostitute their eyes to unchaste objects, and yet be chaste; that will lend their eares to any corrupt doctrine of the times, and yet be sound in the faith; this is a strong delusion

lusion that such were under. If a man hath not power enough to resist Satan in the lesse, what reason hath he to think he shall in the greater? Thou hast not grace (it seemes) to keep thee from throwing thy self into the whirl of temptation, and dost thou think, when in it, thou shalt bear up against the stream of it? one would think it is easier when in the Ship, to keep from falling over-board, than when in the Sea, to get safely into the Ship again.

Thirdly, he is an accusing enemy, and truly folly is in that mans name, who knows what a tell-tale the Diuel is, and yet will by yielding to his temptation put an etrand into his mouth, with which he may accuse him to God. Some foolishly report that Witches cannot hurt, till they receive an almes. But I am sure, so long as thou shewest no kinnesse to the Diuel, he cannot hurt thee, because he cannot accuse thee; take up therefore holy *Jobs* resolution, *Job 27.* *My righteousnesses I hold fast, my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.* It is never sad indeed with the soul till the barking is within doors; conscience (not the Diuel) is the blood-honnd that pulls down the creature. Oh let not that reproach thee, and thou art well enough.

3



CHAP.



CHAP. II.

Wherein is shewed what it is for a Christian to stand in order, together with his duty in this particular, and the danger of straglers from their own place.

2.

SEcoudly, to *stand*, amounts to as much as to stand every one in his rank and proper station, and is here opposed to all disorder or stragling from our place; when a Captain sees his souldiers march, or fight out of their rank and order, then he bids *stand*. Military discipline is so strict in this case, that it allows none to stirre from their place without special warrant. It hath cost some their lives for fighting out of their place, though with great successe. *Manlius* killed his own sonne for no other fault. From hence the note is,

Note.

That it should be the care of every Christian, to stand orderly in the particular place wherein God hath set him. The Divels method is first to rout, and than to ruine. Order supposeth company, one that walks alone cannot go out of his rank. This place therefore and rank wherein the Christian is to stand, relates to some society or company in which he walks. The Christian may be considered relating to a three-fold society, Church, Common-wealth and Family. In all there are several ranks and Places. In the Church, Officers and private Members. In the Common-wealth, Magistrates and People. In the Family, Masters and Servants; Parent and Children; Husband and Wife. The welfare of these societies consisteth in the order that is kept, when every wheel moves in its place without clashing, when every one contributes
by

by performing the duty of his place to the benefit of the whole society; But more distinctly, then a person stands orderly in his place when he doth these three things.

First, when he understands the peculiar duty of his place and relation. *The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way*, Prov. 14. 8. his way, that is the way which he in particular is to walk. It will not profit a man to know the way to *Tork*, if going to *London*; yet how prone are we to study another way and work than our own? The servant what his Masters duty is, not what his is to his Master. The people what the Minister in his place should do; rather than what is incumbent on themselves to such as are over them in the Lord. It is not knowing anothers duty, no nor censuring the negligence of another, but doing our own will brings us safely and comfortably to our journeys end, and how can we do it, except we know it? *Solomon* in no one thing gave a greater proof of his wisdom, than in asking of God wisdom to enable him for the duty of his place.

Secondly, when knowing the duty of our place, we conscientiously attend to it, and lay out our selves for God therein. What *Paul* charged *Timothy* in his place, that every Christian must do in his; he must meditate on these things, and give himself wholly to the discharge of his duty, as a Christian in such a place and calling, *ἐν τούτῳ ἰδί, 1 Tim. 4. 15. be in them*, let thy heart be on thy work, and thou wholly taken up about it. The very power of godliness lies in this. Religion, if not made practicable in our several places and callings, becomes ridiculous, and vanisheth into an empty notion that is next to nothing. Yet many there are that have nothing to prove themselves Christians, but a naked profession, of whom we may say as they do of the Cinnamon-tree, that the bark is more worth than all they have besides. Such the Apostle speaks of, *2 Tim. 1. 16. They professe that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate*. What good works the Apostle means, will appear by the next words, *chap. 2. 1.* where in opposition to these he presseth those duties which Christians in their particular places and relations (as becometh holiness) ought to performe. A good Christian and a disobedient wife, a
(C) godly

godly man and an unfaithful servant; or undutiful childe, is a contradiction that can never be reconciled. He that walks not uprightly in his house, is but an hypocrite at Church. He that is not a Christian in his shop, is not in his closter a Christian, though upon his knees in prayer. Wound Religion in one part, and 'tis felt in every part. If it declines one way, it cannot thrive in any other. All that miscarry In Religion, do not the same way miscarry. As it is in the regard of our natural life, some ('tis observ'd.) die upwards, some down-wards. In one, the extreame parts, his feet are first dead, and so creeps up to the legges, and so at last takes hold on the vitals; in another his superiour parts are first invaded. Thus in profession, some, their declining appears first in a negligence of duties about their particular callings, and duties they owe by their place and relation to man, who all this while seeme very forward and zealous in the duties of worship to God, much in hearing, praying, and such like: others falter first in these, and at the same time seem very strict in the other; both destructive alike to the soul, they both meet in the ruine of the power of godliness. He stands orderly that makes conscience of the whole duty that lies on him in his place to God or man.

3. Thirdly, to stand orderly, it is requisite that we keep the bounds of our place and calling. The *Israelites* were commanded to pitch every man by his own standard, Numb. 2. 2. The Septuagint translates it, *κατά τάς τάξεις*, according to order. God allows no straglers from their station in his Army of Saints. As the Lord hath called every man, so let him walk, 1 Cor. 7. 17. Our walk must be in that path which our Call beats out. We are therefore commanded every one to do his own business, 1 Thes. 4. 11. That which is the Commanders business in an army, is not the private souldiers; The Magistrates, not the subjects; The Ministers not the peoples. That which is justice in the Ruler, is murder in another. They are *idua*, our own things, that come within the compasse of our general or particular calling; out of these, we are out of our diocese. O what a quiet world should we have, if every thing and person knew his own place! If the sea kept its own place we should

should have no inundations; if men had theirs, we should neither have seen such floods of sinne, nor miseries, as this unhappy age has been almost drowned with. But it must be a strong bank indeed, that can containe our fluid spirits within our own terms. *Peter* himself was sharply chid, for prying out of a curiosity into that which concern'd him not. *What is that to thee?* John 21. 22. as if *Christ* had said, *Peter*, meddle with thy own matters, this concerns not thee; which sharp rebuke (saith one) might possibly make *Peter* afterwards give so strict a charge against, and set so black a brand upon this very sin, as you may finde, 1 *Pet.* 4. 15. where he ranks the busie body among murderers and thieves.

Now to fix every one in his place, and perswade all to stand orderly there without breaking their ranck, these five considerations (me thinks) may carry some weight, among those especially, with whom the Word of God in the Scripture yet keeps its authority to conclude and determine their thoughts.

1. Consider, what thou doest out of thy place is not acceptable to God, because thou canst not do it in faith, *without which it's impossible to please God*; and it cannot be in faith, because thou hast no call. God will not thank thee for doing that which he did not set thee about; possibly thou hast good intentions; so had *Uzzah* in staying the Ark, yet how well God liked his zeal, see 2 *Sam.* 6. 7. *Saul* himself could make a faire story of his sacrificing, but that served not his turne. It concernes us not only to ask our selves what the thing is we do, but also who requireth this at our hands? To be sure, God will at last put us upon that question, and it will go ill with us if we cannot shew our commission. So thing we must needs neglect what is our duty, as we are busie about that which is not. The Spouse confesseth this, *Cant.*

1. 6. *I they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept*; she could not minde theirs and her own too; our own iron will cool while we are beating anothers. And this must needs be displeasing to God, to leave the work God sets us about, to do that he never commanded. When a Master calls a truantly Scholar to account, that hath been missing some dayes from Schoole, would this be a good

plea for him to tell his Master, that he was all the while in such a mans shop at work with his tooles? No sure; his businesse lay at School, not in that shop.

2.

2. By going out of our proper place and calling, we put our selves from under Gods protection: The promise is, he will keep us in *all our wayes*, *Psalm 91. 11.* when we go out of our way, we go from under his wing. We have an excellent place for this, *1 Cor. 7. 24.* *Let every one wherein he is called, therein abide with God.* Mark that phrase, *abide with God.* As we love to walk in Gods company, we must abide in our place and calling; every step from that is a departure from God; and better to stay at home in a mean place, and low calling, wherein we may enjoy Gods sweet presence, than go to Court, and there live without him. 'Tis like you have heard of that holy *Bishop*, that in a journey fell into an Inne, and by some discourse with the Host, finding him to be an Atheist, or very atheistical, presently calls for his servant to bring him his horse, saying, he would not lodge there, for God was not in that place. Truly when thou art in any place, or about any work to which thou art not called, we may safely say, God is not in that place, or enterprize; and what a bold adventure is it to stay there, where you cannot expect his presence to assist, or protect? *As a bird that wandreth from her nest, so is a man that wandreth from his place.* *Prov. 27. 8.* God took special care, that the bird sitting over her egges in her nest should not be hurt; *Deut. 22. 6.* but we finde nothing to secute her if found abroad. In doing the duty of our place, we have heavens word for our security, but upon our own perill be it if we wander; then we are like *Shimei* out of his precincts, and lay our selves open to some judgement or other. It is alike dangerous to do what we are not call'd to, and to neglect or leave undone the duty of our place. As the earth could not bear *Corahs* usurpation of what be-long'd not to them, but swallowed them up. So the sea could not but bear withesse against *Jonah* the run-away *Prophet*, disdainig to waite him, that fled from his place and work that God called him to. Nay heaven it self would not harbour the *Angels*, when once they left their owne place and office that their Maker had appointed; so those words,

Iude.

Jude 6. ἀπολίπον) ὃ ἴδιον δικητήριον, I find most probably interpreted. The ruine of many souls breaks in upon them at this door. First they break their ranks, and then they are led further into temptation. *Abisalom* first looks over the hedge in his ambitious thoughts, a King he would be; and this wandring desire beyond his place, lets in those bloody sinnes, rebellion, incest and murder, and these ripen'd him for, and at last delivered him up into the hands of divine vengeance. The *Apostle* joynes order and stedfastnesse together, *Col. 2. 5.* *I am with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith.* If an army stands in close order, every one in his place attending his duty, content with his work, 'tis impregnable in a manner. How came many in our dayes, to fall from their stedfastnesse, but by breaking their order!

3. We shall never be charged for not doing anothers work, *Give an account of thy stewardship, Luke 16. 2.* that is, of what by thy place thou wert intrusted with. We may indeed be accessory to anothers sinne and miscarriage in his place. *Be not partakers with them,* saith the *Apostle, Ephes. 5. 7.* there is a partnership (if not very watchful) that we may have with others sinnes, and therefore we may all say *Amen* to that holy mans prayer, *Lord forgive me my other sins.* Merchants can trade in bottomes that are not their own, and we may sinne with other mens hands, many wayes, and one especially is, when we do not lend our brother that assistance in his work and duty, which our place and relation obligeth too; but 'tis not our sinne, that we do not supply anothers negligence; by doing that which belongs not to our place. We are to pray for Magistrates that they may rule in the fear of God, but if they do not, we may not step upon the Bench, and do his work for him. God requires no more than faithfulness in our place. We do not find fault with an apple-tree, if it be laden with apples (which is the fruit of its own kinde), though we can finde no figs or grapes growing on it; we expect these only from their proper root and stock. He is a fruitful tree in Gods Orchard, that brings forth his fruit in his season.

Psal. 1. 3.

4. There is poor comfort in suffering, for doing that which

which was not the work of our place and calling. Before we launch out into any undertaking, it behoves us to ask our selves, and that seriously, what our tackling is, if a storme should overtake us in our voyage. It is folly to engage in that enterprize, which will not bear us out, and pay the charge of all the losse and trouble it can put us to. Now, no comfort, or countenance from God can be expected in any suffering, except we can entitle him to the businesse we suffer for. *For thy sake are we killed all the day long*, saith the Church, *Psalme 44. 22.* But if suffering findes us out of our calling and place, we cannot say, *for thy sake* we are thus and thus afflicted, but for our own sakes; and you know the *Proverb*, *Self-do, self-have.* The *Apostle* makes a vast difference between suffering as a *busie body*, and suffering as a *Christian*, *1 Pet. 4. 15, 16.* 'Tis to the latter he saith, *let him not be ashamed, but let him glorifie God in this behalf;* as for the busie body, he mates him with thieves and murderers; and those, I trow, have reason both to be ashamed and afraid. The Carpenter that gets a cut or wound on his legge from his axe, as he is at work in his calling, may beare it more patiently and comfortably, than one that is wantonly meddling with his tooles, and hath nothing to do with such work. When affliction or persecution overtakes the Christian travelling in the way God hath set him in, he may shew the *Bible* as that *Holy man* (suffering for Christ) did, and say, *This hath made me poore, this hath brought me to prison;* that is, his faith on the truths, and obedience to the commands in it, and therefore may confidently expect to suffer at Gods cost, as the souldier to be kept and maintained by his Prince in whose service he hath lost his limbs. But the other that runnes out of his place, and so meets with sufferings, he hath this to imbitter them; that he can look for nothing from God but to be fondly chid for his paines, as the child is serv'd, that gets some hurt while he is gadding abroad, and when he comes home at night with his batter'd face, meets with a whipping from his father, into the bargain for being from home. This lay heavy on the spirit of that learned German, *Johannes Funccius*, who of a Minister of the Gospel in his Princes Court, turn'd Minister of State to his Prince;

Prince, and was at last for some evil counfel (at least so judg'd) condemned to die. Before he suffered, he much lamented the leaving of his calling, and to wayne others left this Distick.

Disce meo exemplo mandato munere fungi,
Et fuge cen pestem τὴν πολυεργασίαν.
To keep thy place and calling learn of me :
Flee as the plague a medlar for robe.

Fifthly, it is an erraticque spirit that usually carries men out of their place and calling. I confesse there is an *Heroicus impetus*, an impulse which some of the servants of God have had from heaven, to do things extraordinary, as we read in Scripture of *Moses, Gideon, Phineas*, and others. But it is dangerous to pretend to the like, and unlawful to expect such immediate commissions from heaven now, when he issueth them out in a more ordinary way, and gives rules for the same in his Word; we may as well expect to be taught extraordinarily, without using the ordinary means, as to be call'd so. When I see any miraculously gifted, as the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, then I shall think the immediate calling they pretend to is Authentick. To be sure, we finde in the Word, extraordinary calling and extraordinary teaching go together. Well, let us see what that erraticque spirit is which carries many out of their place and calling. It is not alwayes the same; sometimes it's idlenesse. First men neglect what they should do, and then are easily perswaded to meddle with what they have nothing to do. The *Apostle* intimates this plainly, *1 Tim. 5. 13. They learn to be idle, wandering from house to house, and not only idle, but busy bodies.* An idle person is a gadder; He hath his foot on the threshold, easily drawn from his own place, and as soon into anothers Diocese. He is at leisure for to heare the devils chat. He that will not serve God in his own place; the devil, rather than he shall stand out, will send him of his errand, and get him to put his sickle into anothers corne. Secondly, its pride, and discontent that makes persons go out of their place; some men are in this very unhappy, their spirits are too big and haughty for the place God

God hath set them in. Their calling may be, is mean and low, but their spirits high and towering, and whereas they should labour to bring their hearts to their condition, they project how they may bring their condition to their proud hearts. They think themselves very unhappy while they are shut up in such streight limits, (indeed the whole world is too narrow a walk for a proud heart, *astuat infelix angusto limite mundi*. The world was but a little ease to *Alexander*) shall they be hid, in a croud, lie in an obscure corner, and dye before they let the world know their worth? No, they cannot brook it, and therefore they must get on the stage, and put forth themselves one way or other. It was not the Priests work that *Corah* and his complices were so in love with, but the Priests honour which attended the work, this they desired to share; and liked not to see others runne away with it from them; nor the zeal that *Abselom* had to do justice, which made his teeth water so after his fathers Crown, though this must silver over his ambition. These places of Church and State are such faire flowers, that proud spirits in all ages, have been ambitious to have them set in their own garden; though they never thrive so well as in their proper soyle. In a third, 'tis unbelief; this made *Ozzab* stretch forth his hand unadvisedly to stay the Ark that shook, which being not a *Levire*, he was not to touch. See *Numb.* 4. 15. Alas! good man, it was his faith shook more dangerously than the Ark, by fearing the fall of this, he fell to the ground himself. God needs not our sinne to shoar up his glory, Truth, or Church. Lastly, in some it is misinformed zeal; many think they may do a thing, because they can do it. They can preach, and therefore they may; wherefore else have they gifts? certainly the gifts of the Saints need not be lost any of them, though they be not laid out in the Ministers work. The private Christian hath a large field wherein he may be serviceable to his brethren, he need not break the hedge which God hath set, and thereby occasion such disorder as we see to be the consequence of this. We read in the *Jewish* Law, *Exod.* 22. that he who set a hedge on fire, and that fire burnt the corn standing in a Field, was to make restitution, though he only fired the hedge, (may be

not

not intending to hurt the corn) and the reason was, because his firing the hedge, was an occasion of the corns being burnt, though he meant it not. I dare not say, that every private Christian who hath in these times taken upon him the Ministers work, did intend to make such a combustion in the Church, as hath been, and still sadly is among us (God forbid I should think so) But, O that I could clear them from being accessory to it, in that they have fired the hedge which God hath set between the Ministers calling and Peoples. If we will acknowledge the Ministry a particular office in the Church of Christ, (and this I think the Word will compel us to do,) then we must also confess it is not any ones work, (though never so able) except called to the Office. There are many in a Kingdome to be found, that could do the Princes errand (*tis like) as well as his Embassadour, but none takes the place, but he that is sent, and can shew his letters credential. Those that are not sent and commissioned by Gods call for Ministerial Work, they may speak truths as well as they that are, yet of him that acts by vertue of his calling, we may say that he preacheth with authority, and not like those that can shew no commission, but what the opinion themselves have of their own abilities gives them. Dost thou like the Ministers work? why shouldst thou not desire the office, that thou mayest do the work acceptably? Thou dost find thy self (gifted as thou thinkest for the work, but were not the Church more fit to judge so than thy self? and if thou shouldst be found so by them appointed for the trial, who would not give thee the right hand of fellowship? there are not so many labourers in Christs field, but thy help (if able) would be accepted; but as now thou adest, thou bringest thy self into suspicion in the thoughts of sober Christians, as he would justly do, who comes into the field, where his Prince hath an Army, and gives out he comes to do his Sovereign service against the common enemy, yet stands by himself at the head of a Troop he hath got together, and refuseth to take any commission from his Princes Officers, or joyn himself with them. I question whether the service such a one can perform, (should he mean as he saies, which is to be feared) would do so much good, as the distraction, (which this his carriage might cause in the Army) would do hurt.



CHAP. III.

Wherein is contain'd the third and last importance of the word stand, and the Christians duty of standing on his watch spoken to, why he is to watch, and how he should.

37

THirdly, to stand, here is opposed to sleep and sloath, standing is a waking, watching posture; when the Capitaine sees his souldiers lying secure upon the ground asleep, He bids *stand to your armes*, that is, stand and watch. In some cases it is death for a souldier to be found asleep; as when he is appointed to stand sentinel, or the like; now to sleep, deserves death, because he is so wake that the whole army may sleep; and his sleep may cost them their lives; therefore a great Captain thought: he gave that souldier but his due, whom he runne through with his sword, because he found him asleep when he should have stood Sentinel, excusing his severity with this, that he left him but as he found him, *Mortuus inveni, & mortuus reliqui, I found him dead in sleep, and left him but a sleep in death.* Watchfulness is more needful for the Christian souldier than any other, because other souldiers fight with men that need sleep as well as themselves; but the Christians grand enemy *Satan*, is ever awake and walking his rounds, seeking whom he may surprize. And if *Satan* be alwayes awake, it is dangerous for the Christian at any time to be spiritually asleep, that is, secure and careless. The Christian is seldome worsted, by this his enemy, but there is either treachery or negligence in the
businessse

business; either the unregenerate part betrays him, or grace is not wakeful to make a timely discovery of him, so as to prepare for the encounter, the enemy is upon him before he is throwly awake to draw his Sword. The Saints sleeping time, is Satans tempting time; every Fly dares venture to creep on a sleeping Lyon. No temptation so weak, but is strong enough to foil a Christian, that is napping in security: *Sampson* asleep, and *Dalilah* cuts his Locks. *Saul* asleep, and the Spear is taken away from his very side, and he never the wiser. *Noah* asleep, and his gracelesse Sonne has a fit time to discover his Fathers nakednesse. *Eurichus* asleep, nods, and falls from the third Loft, and is taken up for dead. Thus the Christian asleep in security, may soon be surprized so, as to lose much of his spiritual strength; *The joy of the Lord* which is his strength, be rob'd of his Spear, his armour, greatest mean, at least in the present use of them, and his nakednesse discovered by gracelesse men, to the shame of his profession; as, when bloody *Joab* could take notice of *Dauids* vain glory in numbring the people, was not *Dauids* grace asleep; yet, he may fall from a high loft of profession, so low, into such scandalous practises, that others may question whether there be any life of grace indeed in him. And therefore it becomes the Christian to stand wakefully; sleep steals as insensibly on the Soul, as it doth on the Body. The wise Virgin fell asleep as well as the foolish, though not so soundly; take heed thou dost not indulge thy self in thy lazy distemper, but stir up thy self to action, as we bid one that is drowse, stand up, or walk. Yield to it by idleness and sloath, and it will grow upon thee; bestir thy self in this duty, and that, and it will over. *David* first awakes his tongue to sing, his hand to play on his Harp, and then *Dauids* heart awakes also, *Psalms* xi. 8. The Lyon (as said) when he first wakes, lashes himself with his Tayl; thereby to stir and rouse up his courage; and then away he goes after his prey, we have enough to excite and provoke us to use all the care and diligence possible.

First, The Christians work is too curious to be done well between sleeping and waking, and too important to be done ill, and slubber'd over, no matter how. He had need be awake

that walks upon the brimme of a deep River, or brow of a steep Hill. The Christians path is so narrow, and the danger is so great, that calls for both a nimble eye to discern, and steady eye to direct, but a sleepy eye can do neither. Look upon any duty or grace, and you will find it lye between *Seyla* and *Charybdis*, two extreame, alike dangerous. Faith, the great work of God, cuts its way between the mountain of presumption, and gulf of despair; Patience, a grace so necessary, that we cannot be without it a day, except we would be all that while besides our selves. This keeps us that we fall neither into the sleepy apoplexy of a blockish stupidity, which deprives the creature of its senses; nor into a raging fit of discontent, which hath sense enough, and too much, to feel the hand of God, but deprives the man of his reason; that he turns again upon God, and shoots back the Almighty's arrows on his fiery face, in the fury of his froward spirit. The like we might say of the rest. No truth but hath some error next doore to her; no duty can be performed without approaching very near the enemies Quarters, who soon takes the Alarm, and comes out to oppose the Christian; and ought he not then to have always his heart on the watch?

2. Secondly, the trouble of watching is not comparable to the advantage it brings.

1. First, by this, thou frustratest the designs Satan hath upon thee: It is worth watching to keep the house from robbing, much more the heart from rising by the Devil. Watch, that ye *enter not into temptation.* He buyes his sheep dear, that payes his throat-cutting for it; yea, though the wound be not so deep, but may be cured at last. Thy not watching one night, may keep thee awake many a night upon a more uncomfortable occasion. And hadst thou not better wake with care, to keep thy self from a mischief, than afterward thy eyes be held open (whether thou wilt or not) with pain and anguish of the wound given thee in thy sleep? you know how sadly *David* was bruised, by a fall got in his spiritual slumber (for what else was he, when in the even-tide he rose from his bed, and walked upon the roof of his house, like a man walking in his sleep?) and how many restless nights this brought over this holy mans head, you may perceive by his own mournful complaints

Matth. 26. 41.

2 Sam. 11. 2.

sleep

plaints of this sinne, which is the foot and sad burthen of several mournful *Psalms*.

Secondly, by thy watchfulnesse thou shalt best learn the evil of a sleepy state; one asleep is not sensible of his own snoring, how uncomely and troublesome to others it is, but he that is awake, is apprehensive of both. The man asleep is not sensible if laid naked by some that would abuse him; but he that is awake, o bierves, is alhamed, and covers him; thus while thou art in a spiritual sense awake, thou canst not but observe many uncomely passages in the lives of those professors, who do not watch their hearts, which will fill thy heart with pity to them, to see how they are abused by Satan and their own passions; which like rude Servants, take this their own time to play their pranks in, when they have made sure of their Mistress (grace I mean now laid asleep) that should keep them in better rule: yea, it will make the blood come into thy face for shame to see how by their nakedness, profession in self is flouted at, by those that passe by, and see how it is with them; well, what thou blushest to see, and pities to find in another, take heed it befall not thy self; if thou sufferest a spiritual slumber to grow upon thee, thou wilt be the man thy self that all this may come upon, and what not besides? Sleep levels all, the wise man then is no wiser than a fool, to project for his safety; nor the strong man better than the weak to defend himself; if slumber falls once upon thy eye, it is night with thee, and thou art (though the best of Saints) but as other men; so farre as this sleepe prevales on thee.

Thirdly, by thy watchfulnesse thou shalt invite such company in unto thee, as will make the time short, and sweet, and that is thy dear Saviour; whose sweet communication and discourse, about the things of thy Fathers Kingdome, will make thou shalt not grutch the ease sleepy Christians get with the losse of such an heavenly entertainment, as thou enjoyest. Who had not (that loves his soul better than his body) rather have *David's* songs, than *David's* sleep in the night? And who had not rather have Christs comforting presence with a waking soul, than his absence with a sleepy sloathful one? 'Tis the watchful soul that Christ delights to

be with, and open his heart unto. We do not choose that for the time of giving our friends a visit, when they are asleep in their beds, nay if we be with them, and perceive they grow sleepy, we think 'tis time to leave them to their pillow, and verily Christ doth so too. Christ withdraws from the Spouse, till she be better awake, as a fitter time for her to receive his loves. Put the sweetest wine into a sleepy mans hand, and you are like to have it all spilt; yea, put a purse of gold into his hand, and the man will hardly remember in the morning what you give him over-night. Thus in the sleepy state of a soul, both the Christian loatheth the benefit, and Christ the praise of his mercy; and therefore Christ will stay to give out his choise favours, when the soul is more wakeful, that he may both do the creature good, and his creature may speak good of him for it.

Quest.

Quest. But how must the Christian stand upon his watch?

Ans.

Exod. 30. 8.

Answer. First, constantly. The Lamp of God in the Tabernacle was to burne *alwayes*, Exod. 27. 20. that is, *alwayes* in the night, which sense is favoured by several other places. And I pray, what is our life in this world but a dark night of temptation? take heed Christian that thy watch-candle go not out in any part of this darksome time; lest thy enemy come upon thee in that hour. He can finde thee, but not thou resist him in the dark, if once thy eye be shut in a spiritual slumber, thou art a fair mark for his wrath; and know thou canst not be long off thy watch, but the Devil will heat on. The Devil knew the Apostles sleeping time, and then he desires leave to winnow them, *Luke 22.* He saw they were in some disorder, the eye of their soul began to be heavie, the thief riseth when honest men go to bed. The Devil, I am sure, begins to tempt when Saints cease to watch; when the staff is thrown away, then the Wolf appears. When the soul puts her danger furthest off, and lies most secure, then 'tis nearest, therefore labour to be constant in thy holy care, the want of this spoiles all. Some you shall have, that after a great fall into a sin that hath braised them sorely, will seeme very careful for a time where they set their foot; how they walk, and what company they come in; but as soone as the forecuse of their

consciencs weares off, their watch broke up; and they are as carelesse as ever; like one that is very careful to shut up his shop strongly, and may be sit up late to watch it also, for two or three nights after it hath been robb'd, but then minds it no more. Others in an affliction, or newly come out of the furnace, O how nice and scrupulous are they while the smell of fire is about them, and memory of their distresse fresh; they are as tender of sinning, as one that comes out of a hot close room is of the aire; they shrink at every breath of temptation stirring; but alas, how soone are they hardened to commit those finnes without remorse, the bare motion of which, but a little before, did so trouble and afflict them? *Josephus* in his *Antiq.* tells us that the sonnes of *Noah* for some years after the flood, dwelt on the tops of high mountains, not daring to take up their habitation in the lower ground, for feare of being drown'd by another flood; yet in proceſſe of time (seeing no flood came) they ventured down to the plain of *Shinar*, where their former fear we see ended in one of the boldest, proudest attempts against God; that the Sunne was ever witnesse to; the building I mean of a Tower whose top should reach heaven, *Gen. xi. 2, 3.* they, who at first were so maidenly and fearful, as not to venture down their hills, for feare of drowning, now have a design to secure themselves against all future attempts from the God of heaven himself. Thus oft we see Gods judgments leave such an impression in mens spirits, that for awhile they stand aloof from their finnes (as they on their hills) afraid to come down to them, but when they see faire weather continue, and no clouds gather towards another storme, then they can descend to their old wicked praetises, and grow more bold and heaven-daring than ever. But if thou wilt be a Christian indeed, keep on thy watch still, remit not in thy care, thou hast well runne hitherto, O lie not down (like some lazier traveller) by the way side to sleep, but reserve thy resting time till thou gettest home out of all danger. Thy God rested not till the last dayes work in the Creation was finished; neither do thou cease to wake or work, till thou canst say, thy salvation work is finished.

Secondly, watch universally, First, watch thy whole man. The honest watch-man walks the rounds, and compasseth the whole

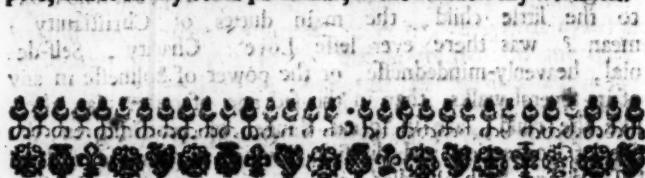
whole Town. He doth not limit his care to this house or thar. So do thou watch over thy whole man. A pore in thy body is a door wide enough to let in a disease, if God command, and any one faculty of thy soul, or member of thy body, to let in an enemy that may endanger thy spiritual welfare. Alas, how few set the watch round? Some one faculty is not guarded, or member of the body not regarded. He that is scrupulous in one, you shall find him secure in another. May be, thou settest a watch at the door of thy lips, that no impure communication offends the ears of men; but how is the *Lords watch* kept at the temple door of thy heart? Is not that defiled with lust? Thou (may be) keepst thy hand out of thy Neighbours purse, and foot from going on a theevish errand to thy neighbours house. But does not thy envious heart grutch him what God allows him? when thou prayest, thou art very careful thy outward posture be reverent; but what eye hast thou on thy soul, that it performs its part in the duty? Secondly, watch in every thing: If the Apostle bids in every thing give thanks, then it behoves us, in every thing to watch, that God may not lose his praise, which he doth in most, for want of watching. No action so little (almost): but we may in it do God, or the Devil some service, and therefore none too little for our care to be bestowed on. He was a holy man indeed, of whom it was said, that he ate and drank eternal life. The meaning is, he kept such a holy watch over himselfe in these things, that he was in Heaven while doing them. There is no creature so little among all Gods works, but his providence watcheth over it, even to a Sparrow, and a Hair. Let there be no word or work of thine, over which thou art not watchful. Thou shalt be judged by them, even to thy idle words and thoughts, and wilt thou not have care of them?

3. Thirdly, watch wisely; which thou shalt do, if thou knowest where thou shouldest keep strictest watch, and that must be first in the weightiest duty of the command; *tything of Cummin and Aunicy* must not be neglected; but take heed thou doest not neglect the weightiest things of the Law, judgement, mercy, and faith, making your preciseness in the lesse, a blind for your horrible wickedness in the greater.

Begin

Begin at the right end of your work (Christian) by placing your chief care about those main duties to God and Man, in his Law and Gospel, in his Worship, and in thy daily course, which when thou hast done, neglect not the circumstantial, should a Master before he goes forth, charge his Servant to look to his Child, and trimme his house up handsomely against he comes home; when he returns, will he thank his Servant for sweeping his house, and making it trimme (as he bade him,) if he finds his Child through his negligence fallen into the fire, and by it kil'd or crippled? No sure, he left his Child with him as his chief charge, to which the other should have yielded; if both could not be done. There hath been a great zeal of late among us, about some circumstantial of Worship, but who looks to the little child, the main duties of Christianity I mean? was there ever lesse Love, Charity, Self-denial, heavenly-mindednesse, or the power of holinesse in any of its severall walks, than in this sad age of ours? alas, these like the child, are in great danger of perishing in the fire of contention and division, which a perverse zeal in lesse things hath kindled among us. *Secondly*, Be sure thou beest watchful more than ordinary over thy self, in those things where thou findest thy self weakest and hast been ofttest soiled. The weakest part of the City needs the strongest Guard, and in our Bodies the tenderest part is most observ'd, and kept warmest. And I should think it were strange, if thy spirit or grace stands so strong and even, that thou shouldest not soon perceive which side needs the shoar most, by some inclination of it one way more than another. Thy body is not so firm, but thou findest this humour over-abound, and that part crave faster than another, and so mayest thou in thy soul. Well, take counsell in the thing, and what thou findest weakest, watch most carefully. Is it thy head that is weak, thy judgement I mean? watch thy self, and come not among those that drink no Wine, but that which thy weak parts cannot bear (Seraphique notions, and high-flown opinions) and do not think thy self much wrong'd to be forbidden their cup; such strong wine is more heady than hearty,

and they that trade most with it, are not found of the healthiest tempers of their souls, no more than they that live most of strong-water are for their bodies. Is thy impotency in thy passions? Indeed we are weak, as they are strong and violent. Now watch over them; as one that dwells in a thatcht house, would do off every spark that flies out his Chimney, lest it should light on it, and set all on fire. Take heed what speeches comes from thy mouth, or from any thou conversest with, this is the little instrument sets the whole course of nature on flame; when our neighbours house is on fire, we cast water on our roof, or cover it with a wet sheet; when the flame breaks out at anothers mouth, now look what throwest water on thy own hot spirit, some cooling, wrath-quenching Scriptures and Arguments ever carry with thee for that purpose, and so in any other particular, as thou findest thy weakness.



VERSE 14.

Having your loynes girt about with truth.



He Apostle having ordered the *Epistles* and in them every Christian, the posture which they are to observe in fight with their enemy, He comes now to instance in the several pieces of that armour, which before he had commended to them only in general. The first of which is the *Girdle of truth*.



CHAP. I.

Wherein is contained a brief Explication of the words.

Having your loynes girt about with truth. A twofold enquiry is here requisite. First, what he means by truth. Secondly, what by loynes, and their being girt with truth.

First, for the first. What is truth here? some by truth understand Christ, who indeed elsewhere is called the truth, yet in this place I conceive not so properly, because the Apostle instanteth here in several pieces and parts of armour, one distinct from another, and Christ cannot so well be said to be a single piece to defend this or that part, as the whole in whom we are compleat, compared therefore, *Rem. 13.* to the whole Suit of Armour, put ye on the Lord Jesus, that is, be clothed and harness with Christ, as a souldier with his Armour cap-a-pe. Some by truth, mean truth of doctrine; others will have it truth of heart, sincerity; They I think best, that comprize both. And so I shall handle it. Both indeed are required to make the girdle compleat, one will not do without the other. 'Tis possible to find good meanings, and a kind of sincerity without, yea, against the truth. Many follow an error, as they *Absalom* in the simplicity of their hearts. Such do all while they mean well. Good intentions do no more make a good action, than a fair mark makes a good shot by an unskilful Archer? God did not like *Sauls* zeal when he persecuted the Christian Church, though he thought (no question) he did him good service therein. Neither is it enough to

have truth on our side, if we have not truth in our hearts. *Jehu* was a great stickler against idolatry, but kickt down all again by his hypocrisie. Both then are necessary; *sincerity* to propound a right end, and knowledge of the word of *truth*, to direct us in the right way to that end.

2.

Secondly, what is meant here by *loynes* that are to be girt with this Girdle? The loynes must be like the girdle. This is spiritual, and therefore they must be so. *Peter* will help to interpret *Paul*; *Gird up the loynes of your mindes*, 1 Pet. 1. 13. They are our mindes and spirits which must wear this girdle, and very fitly may our spirits and mindes be compared to the loynes. The loynes are the chief seat of bodily strength. Of *Behemoth* its said, *Job* 40. 16. *His strength is in his loynes*. The loynes are to the body, as *Carina navi*, the keel to the ship. The whole ship is knit to that, and sustained by it. And the body to the loynes, if the loynes fail, the whole body sinks; hence to *smite through the loynes*, is a phrase to expresse destruction and ruine, *Deut.* 33. 11. weak loynes, and a weak man; if we be but a little weary, nature directs us to lay our hands on our loynes to sustain them, as our chief strength. Thus as the actings of our minds and spirits are in their faculties and powers, so we are weak or strong Christians; if the understanding be clear in its apprehensions of truth, and the will sincere, vigorous and fixt in its purposes, for that which is holy and good, then he is a strong Christian. But if the understanding be dark, or uncertain in its notions (as a distempered eye that cannot well discern its object, and the will be wavering and unsteady (like a needle that trembles between two load-stones) not able to bring its thoughts to an issue, which to close with, here the man is weak, and all he doth will be so. Feeble spirits cause an intermitting faltering pulse; so want of strength in the mind, to know truth, and resolution in the will to pursue that which he knows to be holy and good, causeth a man to falter in his course. The use therefore of these two, *truth of doctrine* for the mind, and *sincerity* for the will, is to unite and establish both these faculties, which they do when they are clasp, and girt about the soul, as the girdle about the loynes of the body. Though the loynes be the strength of the body, yet they need an auxiliary, their

their strength from the Girdle, to keep those parts close, and unite their force, without which, men, when they would strain themselves, and put forth their strength in any work, find a trembling and loosenesse in their loynes. Hence the *shaking of the loynes*, is a phrase to expresse weakness, *Psal. 69. 23*. Thus our minds and spirits need this Girdle to strengthen them in every work we do, or else we shall act nothing vigorously.

First, we shall begin with *truth of Doctrine*, or truth of the Word, called the *Word of truth*, *Ephel. 1. 13*. Because it is the Word of God, who is God of truth. It behoves every Christian to be well girt with this truth. *Resist the Devil* (saith Peter) *steadfast in the faith*, *1 Pet. 5. 9*. That is, in the truth, faith being there put for the object of our faith, which is the truth of God, declared in the doctrine of the Gospel; this is the faith which was once delivered to the Saints, *Jude. 10*, that is, the truth delivered to them to be believed and held fast. And of what importance is it to be thus steadfast in the faith, the Apostle Peter in the following ver. of the forementioned place, shews, by his vehement and earnest praying for them, that God would *stablish, strengthen, and settle them*. The heaping of words to the same purpose, implies the great danger they were in, of being unsettled by Satan, and his instruments, and the necessity of their standing firm and unshaken in the faith. Nothing more frequently inculcated than this in the *Epistles*, and the more, because in those blustering times, it was impossible to have kept the faith from being blown from them, without this girdle to hold it fast. Now, as there is a double design Satan hath to rob Christians of truth, so, there is a twofold girding about with this truth necessary.

First, Satan comes as a *Serpent*, in the persons of false Teachers, and by them labours to put a cheat on us, and cozen us with error for truth. To defend us against this design, it is necessary we be girt with truth in our understanding, that we have an established judgment in the truths of Christ.

Secondly, Satan comes sometimes as a *Lyon*, in the persons of bloody Persecutors, and labours to scare Christians from the truth with Fire and Fagor. Now to defend us against this, we

1.

2.

need have truth girt about us, so that with a holy resolution we may maintain our profession in the face of death and danger. To begin with the first.



CHAP. II.

Wherein is shewn, it is the Christians duty to labour for a judgement establishd in the truth; with the Reasons of it; as also some Application of the point.

IT should be the care of every Christian to get an establishd judgement in the truth. The *Bereans* are highly commend- ed, for the enquiry they made into the Scripture, to satisfie their judgements concerning the Doctrine *Paul* preach. They did not believe hand over head, but their faith was the result of a judgement (upon diligent search) convinced by Scripture evidence, *Acts 17. 11.* it's said there, *they searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so.* They carried the Preachers Doctrine to the written Word, and compar'd it with that; and mark *ver. 12.* *Therefore many believed;* as they did not believe before, so they durst not but believe now. I remember *Tertullian* speaking of some *Hereticks*, their manner of Preaching, faith, *persuadendo docent, non docendo persuadent;* *They teach by perswading, and not perswado by teaching;* that is, they woe and entice the affections of their Hearers, without convincing of their judgement about what they preach. Indeed it were a hard work for the adulterer to convince her, he would prostitute, that the fact is lawful, no, he goes another way to work. First, by some amorous insinuations he inveigles her affections, and they once bewicht, the other

is not much questioned, it being easie for the affections, to make the judgement of their party well though errour, like a thief, comes thus in at the Window, yet truth, like the true owner of the house, delights to enter at the right door of understanding, from thence into the conscience, and so passeth into the will and affections. Indeed he that hits upon truth, and takes up the profession of it, before he is brought into the acquaintance of its excellency, and heavenly beauty, by his understanding cannot entertain it becomingly its heavenly birth and descent, 'tis as a Prince that travels in a disguise, not known, therefore not honoured. Truth is loved and prized only of those that know it. And not to desire to know it, is to despise it, as much as knowing it, to reject it. It were not hard sure to cheat that man of truth, who knowes not what he hath. Truth and errour are all one to the ignorant man, so it hath but the name of truth. Leah and Rachel were both alike to Jacob in the dark. Indeed 'tis said in the morning behold it was Leah, Gen. 29. 25. So in the morning when 'tis day in the understanding, then the deceived person will see he hath had a false Bride in his bosome, will cry out, behold, 'tis an errour which I took for a truth, you have may be heard of the covetous man, that hugg'd himself in the many bags of gold he had, but never open'd them, or used them; when the thief took away his gold, and left him his bags full of pebbles in the room, he was as happy as when he had his gold, for he lookt not of the one or other. And verily an ignorant person is in a manner no better with truth, than errour on his side. Both are alike to him, day and night, all one to a blind man.

But to proceed and give some more particular account, why the Christian should endeavour for an establishd judgement in the truth. I shall content my self with three Reasons. The first taken from the damning nature of false doctrine; The second, from the subtilty of seducers to draw into false doctrine, and the third, from the universall influence that an establishd judgement hath on the whole man, and whole course of a Christian.

First, from the damning nature of false doctrines. They hurt for the precious life of souls, as well as any other sin.

And

An impostume in the head, proves oft as deadly as one in the stomach. A corrupt judgement in foundation truths, kills as sure as a rotten heart, indeed it proceeds thence. *Jezebels children are threatened to be kill'd with death, Rev. 2. 23.* and who are her children, but her Disciples, that drink of her cup of Fornication, and embrace her corrupt Doctrines? But sure this is not believed by some, who, though very strict in their lives, and seem as tender in matter of morality, as *Laz* was of his guests, yet are very loose in their principles and judgements, exposing them (as he his daughters) to be defiled with any corrupt doctrine that comes to their door. They would make us think, that here men plaid but at small game, and their souls were not at stake, as in other sinnes. As if there were not such a question to be askt at the great day, what opinions we held, and whether we were found in the faith? in a word, as if false doctrines were but an innocent thing, not like the wild Gourd, which brought death into the *Prophets* pot, (turning wholesome food, with which it was mingled, into baneful poison;) but rather like herb *John* in the pot, that does neither much good nor hurt. Yea, there be some that speak out, and tell us, a man may be saved in any Religion, so he doth but follow his light, and are not these charitable men? who, because they would have the company as few as may be that are damned, make as many roads to heaven, as the Scripture tells us there are wayes to hell? contrary to *Christ*, who tells us of no other way but by him to life. *I am the way, the truth, and the life*, *John 14. 6.* point blank against Saint *John*, who tells us but of one Doctrine, and that the Doctrine of *Christ*, and he that holds not this, to be markt out for a lost man, *Epist. 2. ver. 9. Whosoever transgresseth, and abiderh not in the Doctrine of Christ, hath not God*; and how far I pray is that man off hell, that hath not God? He that hath not God before he dies, the Devil shall have him when he dies. Well, (Sirs) the time is coming, yea it hastens (what favour and kindness soever corrupt doctrine find here at mans hand) wherein the obstinate Heretick shall receive the same Law at *Christs* hands, with the impenitent Drunkard, you may see them both under the same condemnation, as they stand pisoned together for hell, *Gal. 3. 20. 21. I tell you now* (saith the Apostle) *as I have*

a King. 4.

Epist John
9. 10.

sold

told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? And see I pray you if you cannot find the Hereticks Name amongst them? Ignorance in fundamentals is damning, sure then Error in fundamentals much more. If a pound weighs down the scale, there is no doubt then but a stone weight will do it. If the less sin presseth down to Hell, how can we rationally think that the greater should escape it? Error stands at a farther distance from, yea, a fuller contrariety to truth, than ignorance. Error is ignorance with a die on it. He that eats little or nothing, must needs dye, much more he that eats rank poyson. The Apostle doth not only tell us of pernicious doctrines, and damnable heresies, but he tells us, they bring swift damnation upon those that hold the same, 2 Pet. 2. 1. I pray observe what an accent he lays on the damnation that comes by these corrupt doctrines, he calls it *swift damnation*. All Rivers find their way at last to the Sea from whence they sprang, but some return with a more swift stream, and get sooner to it than others. Would any make it a shorter Voyage to Hell than ordinary, let him throw himself but into this stream of corrupt doctrine, and he is not like to be long in going.

Secondly, Because Impostors are so subtle, therefore it behoves the Christian to establish, and strengthen his judgment in the truths of Christ. They are a generation of men, skilful to destroy the faith of others. There is an *studita nequitia* in the world, as one calls it, a learned kind of wickedness; that some have to corrupt the minds of men. The Spirit of God sets them out to life, sometimes comparing them to Merchants, who can set a gloss upon their false Ware with fine words, 2 Pet. 2. 3. They are said with feigned words, to make Merchandize of souls. To Hucksters that blend, and dash their wine with water, 2 Cor. 2. 17. To cheating Gamesters, that have a slight of hand to Cog the Die, Ephes. 4. 14. yea, to Witches themselves, Gal. 3. 1. *Who hath bewitched you?* saith the Apostle; strange things have been done in our dayes, on those that God has suffered them to practise their Sorcery upon, and what counter-charm better than an established judgment? is observable that in 2 Tim. 3. where the Apostle compares the Seducters of that present Age to those Sorcerers, Jannes and Jambres that resisted Moses, and shews what kind of persons they were that sell

into their snare; such as though ever learning, yet never come to the knowledge of the truth, ver. 7. Then he turns to Timothy, ver. 10. *But thou hast fully known my doctrine.* As if he had said, I am out of fear for thee, thou art better grounded in the doctrine of the Apostle, than to be thus cheated of it. Indeed those whom Seducers lay in wait for, are chiefly weak unsettled ones; for as Solomon saith, *In vain the Net is spread in the sight of any Bird,* Prov. 1. 17. The Devil cho'se rather to assault Eve, than Adam, as more likely of the two to be caught. And ever since he takes the same course, he labours to creep over where the Hedge is lowest, and the resistance like to be weakest. Three characters you may observe of those who are most commonly seduced. First, they are call'd *simple ones*, Rom. 16. 18. *by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple,* ἀπλοὶ, such who mean well, but want wisdom to discern those that mean ill, incautious ones, that dare pledge every body, and drink of any ones Cup, and never suspect poisoning. Secondly, *Children*, Eph. 4. 14. *Be no more Children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine.* Now Children they are very credulous; prone to believe every one that gives them a parcel of fair words; they think any thing is good, if it be sweet; 'tis not hard to make them eat poison for sugar; they are not sway'd by principles of their own, but by others; the Child reads, construes and pierces his Lesson as his Master saith, and thinks it therefore right; thus poor Creatures that have little knowledge of the Word themselves, they are easily perswaded this or that way, even as those, of whom they have a good opinion, please to lead them; let the doctrine be but sweet; and it goes down glib; they, like Isaac, bless their opinions by feeling, not by sight; hence many poor creatures applaud themselves so much of the joy they have found since they were of this judgment, and that way, not being able to try the comfort and sweetness they feel, by the truth of their way from the Word, they are fain to believe the truth of it by their feeling, and so poor creatures they bless error for truth. Thirdly, they are such as are unstable, 2 Pet. 2. 14. *beguiling unstable souls,* such as are not well grounded and principled. The truth they profess hath no anchor-hold in their understanding, and so they are at the mercy of the wind, soon set adrift, and carried down the stream of those opinions, which are the fa-

yourites

vourites of the present time, and are most cryed up, even as the dead Fish with the current of the Tyde.

Thirdly, We are to endeavour after an establishd judgment in the truth; because of the universal influence it hath into the whole man. First, into the memory, which is helpd much by the understanding. The more weight is laid on the Sense, the deeper impression is made on the Wax. The memory is that faculty which carries the images of things. It holds fast what we receive, and is that Treasury where we lay up what we desire afterward to use and converse with. Now, the more clear and certain our knowledge of any thing is, the deeper it sinks, and surer it is held by the memory. Secondly, into the affections. Truth is as light, the more steady and fixt the glass of the understanding is, through which its beams are darted upon the affections, the sooner they take fire. *Did not our hearts burn* (said the Disciples) *within us, whil. he opened to us the Scriptures?* Luke 24. 32. They had heard (no doubt) Christ preach much of what then he said before his passion, but never were they so satisfied and confirmed as now, when Scriptures and understanding were opened together, and this made their hearts burn. The Sun in the Firmament sends his influence where he doth not shed his beams, I mean, into the bowels of the Earth; but the Sun of Righteousness imparts his influence only where his light comes, he spreads the beams of truth into the understanding to enlighten that; and while the creature sits under these wings, a kindly heart, a quickning heart is begot in its bosome. Hence we find, even when the Spirit is promised as a Comforter, he comes as a Convincer, John 16. 13, he comforts by teaching. And certainly the reason why many poor trembling souls have so little heat of heavenly joy in their hearts, is, because they have so little light to understand the Nature and Tenure of the Gospel-Covenant. The further a soul stands from the light of truth, the further he must needs be from the heat of comfort. Thirdly, an establishd judgment hath a powerful influence into the life and conversation. The Eye directs the foot, he walks very unsafely, that sees not his way, and he uncomfortably, that is not resolved whether right or wrong. That which moves, must rest on something that doth not move; a man could not walk if the Earth turned under his feet. Now the principles

we have in our understanding, are as it were the ground we go upon in all our actions; if they stagger and reel, much more will our life and practice. 'Tis as impossible for a shaking hand to write a strait line; as an unfixt judgment to have an even Conversation. The Apostle joins stedfastness and unmovableness with *abounding in the work of the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. 58. And if I mistake not, he means chiefly in that place, a stedfastness of judgment; in that truth of the Resurrection, which some had been shaking; it is not the many Notions we have, but the establishment we have in the truth makes us strong Christians; as he is a strong man whose joints are well set together and knit, not he who is spun out at length, but not thicken'd suitable to his height. One saith well, Men are what they see and judge; though some do not fill up their light, yet none go beyond it. A truth under dispute in the understanding, is, as I may so say, stop't in the Head, it cannot commence in the heart, or become practicable in the life: But when it passeth clearly there, and upon its commendation is embraced in the will and affections, then it is held fast, and hath powerful effects in the conversation. The Gospel (its said) came to the *Thessalonians* in much assurance, 1 Thes. 1. 5. i. e. evidence of its truth, and see how prevalent and operative it was, *ver. 6. They became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost.* They were assured that the doctrine was of God, and this carried them merrily through the saddest Afflictions, which attended the same.

Use 1.

First, To reprove those, that instead of endeavouring to establish their judgments in the truth, make it their great study how to strengthen themselves in their errors. I am perswaded, some men take more pains to furnish themselves with arguments to defend some one error they have taken up, than they do for the most saving truths in the Bible; yea, they could sooner dye at a stake to defend one error they hold, than all the truths they profess. *Austin* saith of himself when he was a *Manichean*, *Non tu eras, sed error meus erat Deus meus. Thou O Lord wert not, but my error was my God.* 'Tis hard to reduce a person deeply engaged in the defence of an error; how oft had the *Pharisees* their mouths stop't by our Saviour? yet few or none reclaim'd.

reclaim'd. Their spirits were too proud to recant, what they lay down the Bucklers, come down from *Moses Chair*, and confess what they have taught the people for an Oracle, is now false? They will rather go on, and brave it out as well as they can, than come back with shame, though the shame was not to be ashamed of their Error, but ashamed to confess it. The *Cynick* answered smartly, who coming out of a Brothel-house, was ask'd, whether he was not ashamed to be seen coming out of such a naughty House? said no, the shame was to go in, but honesty to come out. O Sirs, 'tis bad enough to fall into an Error, but worse to persist. The first shews thee a weak man, *humanum est errare*, but the other makes thee too like the Devil, who is to this day of the same mind he was at his first fall.

Secondly, It proves those who labour to unsettle the judgments of others, to ungird this Belt about Christian loyns. They come with the Devils question in their mouths, *Yea, hath God said?* Are you sure this is a truth? Do not your Ministers deceive you? labouring slyly to breed suspicions, and jealousies in the hearts of Christians towards the truths they have received; such were they that troubled the *Galatians*, whom *Paul* wisht cut off for their pains, *Gal. 5. 12*. They laboured to puzzle them, by starting scruples in their minds concerning the doctrine of the Gospel. This is a cunning way at last to draw them from the faith, and therefore they are called *subverters of the faith of others*. The House must needs be in danger, when the ground-fels are loosen'd; Can you think he means honestly, that undermines the foundation of your House? This they do, that would call in question the grand truths of the Gospel. But this is a small fault in our loose Age, or else so many Seducers would not be suffered (whom I may call spiritual Rogues and Vagabonds) to wander like Gypsies up and down, bewitching poor simple souls to their perdition. O 'tis sad, that he who steals the worth of Two or three Shillings, should hold up his hand at the Bar for his life, yea, sometimes hang for it; and that those who rob poor souls of the treasure of saving truths, and subvert the faith of whole Families, should be let to lift up their Heads with impudence, glorying in their impunity. That blasphemy against God should not bear an action, where blasphemy

Use 2.

2 Tim. 2. 14.
Titus 1. 11.

blasphemy against the King is indicted for Treason. It is well that God loves his truth better than men, or else these would escape in both worlds, but God hath declared himself against them. There is a day, when they who rob souls of truth, shall be found, and condemned as greater Felons, than they who rob Houses of gold and silver. See how God layes their Indictment, *Jer. 23. 30. Behold I am against the Prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my Word, every one from his Neighbour.* He means the false Prophets that enticed the people from those truths, which the faithful servants of God had delivered to them. There will be none on the Bench to plead the Blasphemer and Seducers Cause, when God shall sit Judge.

Use 3.

Thirdly, This might well chastise the strange fickleness and unsettledness of judgment, which many labour with in this unconstant Age. Truths in many Professors minds, are not as stars fixt in the Heavens, but like Meteors, that dance in the Aire, they are not as Characters engraven in Marble, but writ in the dust, which every wind and idle breath of Seducers deface; many entertain Opinions, as some entertain Suits, not that they mean to marry them, but cast them off as soon as new ones come. Never was there a more giddy Age than ours. What is said of Fashion-mongers, that some men, should they see their pictures in that habit which they wore a few years past, would hardly know themselves in their present garb. It is most true in regard of their opinions; should many that have been great Professors, take a view of their religious principles a dozen years ago, and compare them with their present, they would be found not the same men. They have so chop'd and chang'd, that they seem to have altered their whole Creed. And 'tis no wonder that so many are for a new Baptism, when they have forsaken their old faith. Not that the old which they renounce was false, or the new which they espouse is true; but because they were either ignorant of the truth they first profess, or were insincere in the profession of it; and it is no wonder that the one should upon easie terms part with that, which he first took up upon as weak grounds as now he leaves it; or that the other who did not love, or improve the truth he profess'd, should be given up of God to change it for an Error. If the Heathen (who did not glorifie God with the light of Nature they had) were righteously given up

up to a reprobate injudicious mind, to do that which was inconvenient, and morally absurd; than they who dishonour God with the revealed light of Scripture-truth, much more deserve, that they should be given up to that which is spiritually wicked, even to believe lyes and errors for truth. A heavy Curse, did we rightly judge of it, to wander and wilder in a maze of error, and yet think they are walking in the way of truth.

Quest. But may some say, How is it possible that ordinary Professors should attain to this establishd judgment in the truth, when we see many of great parts and eminency, much unsettled in their judgments?

Ans. We must distinguish, First, of persons; Secondly, of truths. First, of persons, there are many eminent for parts, whose parts want piety to establish them, and no wonder to see wanton wits unfixed in the truths of God. None sooner tople over into error, than such who have not an honest heart, to a nimble head. The richest soyle without culture most tainted with such weeds. They have been men of un sanctified parts, that have been the leaders in the way of error, though the more simple and weak that are led by them. They are knowing men, which first disgorge and vomit error from their corrupt hearts, and ignorant ones that suck it up. And therefore despair not of an establishd judgment, so long as thou desirest to have an honest upright heart, and conscientiously usest the means. The promise is on thy side, *Psal. 111. 10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and a good understanding have they that do his commands.*

Secondly, We must distinguish of truths, some are fundamental, others are superstruatory; now though many eminent for piety, as well as parts, are in the dark concerning some of the superstruatory, and more circumstantial (because mysteriously laid down in the Word) yet there is a sweet harmony among the godly in fundamentals. And in those, poor soul, thou mayst come by a faithful use of means to be establishd. As for our bodies, God hath so provided, that things necessary to preserve their life, are more common, and to be had at a cheaper Rate, than things for delicacy and state. So also for our Souls. If bread were as hard to come by as sweet Meats, or water as scarce as Wine, the greatest part of men must needs famish; so if truths necessary

to salvation, were as hard to be understood, and cleared from the Scriptures, as some others, many poor weak-hearted Christians, would certainly perish without a miracle to help them. But the saving truths of the Gospel lie plain, and run clear to all, but those who royle the stream with their own corrupt minds.



CHAP. III.

Some Directions for the establishing the judgment of Professors in the truth.

Quest.

But what counsel can you give me towards the establishing of my judgment in the truths of Christ?

Ans. I.

First, Let thy aim be sincere in imbracing truths; a false naughty heart, and an unsound judgment, like Ice and water are produced mutually by one another. The reason of the fickleness of some mens judgments, proceeds from the guile of their hearts. A stable mind, and a double heart seldom meet. That place speaks full to this, 1 Tim. 1. 5. *The end of the Commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned* (now mark what follows) *ver. 6. from which some having swerved* (or as it is in the original) *not aiming at, have turned aside to vain jangling.* They never aimed at the power of holiness in receiving truth, that by it they might advance in their Love, Faith, and other Graces; and taking a wrong end and aim, no wonder they turn out of the right way. A naughty heart can easily bribe the judgment, to vote on its side. This shall be truth now, and no truth a Month hence if it please.

please. That is truth with many, which serves their interest, they tie their judgements to their purse-strings, or preferments, &c. and such men are ready (with that weather-cock in Queen *Maries* dayes) to sing a new song upon any change in their carnal concerns. When love receives a truth, it is held fast, but if lust after any worldly interest be the cause, then it may be packt away again, when the turn is serv'd. *Ammon* was soon as sick of *Tamar* as ever he was for her. And have we not in our dayes seen some Truths and Ordinances kickt away with as much scorn and contempt as he did her, and by those that have been sufficiently fond of them, a few years past, but (to be feared) never truly in love with them?

Secondly, attend on the Ministry of the Word. One great end of its appointment, is to establish us in the truth, *Ephes. 4. 11. He gave some Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints.* And mark, ver. 14. *That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, &c.* He that runs from his guide, will soon be out of his way. It is no small testimony that God hath given to his faithful Ministers in this present age; that few leave them, but the leprosie of error appears soon on their forehead. And in thy waiting on the Ministry of the Word, be sure thou attendest to the doctrinal part of the Sermon, as well as to the applicatory. The former is necessary to make thee a solid Christian, as the other to make thee a warm Christian: Indeed, hot affections, without solid knowledge, are but like fire in the pan, when the piece is not charg'd. The *Levites, Neh. 8. 7, 8.* we find, gave the sentence of the Law, and caused the people to understand it. Planting goes before watering, and so should teaching before exhorting. And the same method people should learn in, that we are to preach in.

Thirdly, enslave not thy judgement to any person or party. There is a spiritual suretiship hath undone many in their judgements and principles; Be not bound to, or for the judgement of any. Weigh truth, and tell gold thou mayest after thy father, Thou must live by thy own faith, not anothers. Labour to see truth with thine own eyes. That building stands weak, which is held up by a shore, or some neighbour house it leans on,

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rather

rather than on any foundation of its own; when these go, that will fall to the ground also; let not authority from man, but evidence from the Word conclude thy judgement; that's but a shore, this a foundation. Quote the Scripture rather than men for thy judgement. Not so saith such a learned holy man; but thus saith the holy Scripture, yet take heed of bending this direction too farre the other way, which is done when we condemn the judgement of such, whose piety and learning might command reverence: There is sure a mean to be found betwixt desying men, and deifying them. 'Tis admiring of persons that is the traitour to truth, and makes many cry *Hosanna* to errour, and *crucifixe* to truth. *Eusebins* out of *Iosephus* tells us of *Herod* (that *Herod* whom we read, *Acts* 12. to be eaten up of wormes) his coming upon the Theatre gorgeously clad, and that while he was making an eloquent Oration to the people, his silver Robe (which he then wore) did by the reflex of the Sun-beams shining on it, so glister, as dazled the eyes of the spectators; And this (saith he) occasioned some flatterers to cry out, *The voice of God, and not of man*. And truly the glistering varnish which some mens parts and Rhetorique put upon their discourses, does oft so blinde the judgements of their admirers, that they are too prone to think all divine they speak, especially if they be such, whom God hath used as instruments for any good to the souls formerly. O 'tis hard then (as he said) *amare hominem humaniter*, to love and esteeme man as a man, to reverence such so, as not to be in danger of loving their errours also. *Augustine* had been a means to convert *Alypius* from one errour, and he confesseth; this was an occasion, why he was so easily by him led into another errour, no lesse than *Manichisme*; *Alyrius* thought he could not pervert him here, that had converted him; call therefore none father on earth, despise none, adore none.

4. Fourthly, beware of curiosity. He is half gone into errour, that vainly covets novelties, and listens after every new fangle opinion. We read of itching eares, *2 Tim.* 4. 3. This itch commonly ends in a scab of errour. *Tamar* lost her chastity by gadding, *castitas mentis est fides incorrupta*. The chastity of the ruind is its soundnesse in the faith. And this they are in danger to lose, who will go into all companies, and lend an eare

to all doctrines that are preacht. First, be a hearer, and then a disciple of them. Many indulge themselves so farre in this curiosity of conversing with every sect and opinion, that at last they turn *Scoptricks*, and can settle upon nothing as truth. *Augustine* confesseth of himself, that he had gone through so many errors and delusions of the *Manichees*, (which he once cry'd up for truths, but afterwards saw them abominable errors) that at last he was afraid of truth it self, which he heard *Ambrose* preach. *Ut malum medicum expertus, etiam bono timeat se committere.* As (saith he) one that hath had experience of an unskilful Physician, is at last afraid to put himself in the hands of him that is skilful. O take heed that you who will now hear any thing, come not in the end that you will believe nothing.

Fifthly, *Humbly beg an established judgment of God.* No travellers lose their way sooner than they who think they know it so well, as they need not ask it. And no professors are in danger of being drawn from the truth, as they who leane to their own understandings, and acknowledge not God in their way, by consulting with himself daily. Mark pride (however it may seeme to soare aloft in profession at present) and you shall finde it at last laid in the ditch of *error* or *profaness*, this is the bed God hath made for it, and it must lye there where God hath appointed its lodging. It is very necessary such men should be left to be bewildred, and so put to shame; that when their understanding returns to them, (if God hath such a mercy in store for them) they may with *Nebuchadnezzar*, *blesse the most high*, and acknowledge him at their return, whom they neglected so unworthily at their setting forth. O take heed therefore of pride, which will soon make thee a stranger at the Throne of grace. Pride takes little delight in begging: It turns humble praying for truth into a busie stickling and ambitious disputing about truth, there is honour to be got here; and thus many to get victory, have lost truth in the heat of the battel. Lay this deep in thy heart. That God, which gives an eye to see truth, must give a hand to hold it fast when we have it. *Qua habemus ab eo, tenere non possumus sine eo. Bern.* What we have from God, we cannot keep without God; keep th therefore thy acquaintance with God, or else Truth will not keep her acquaint-

ance long with thee. God is light, thou art going into the dark, as soon as thou turnest thy back upon him. We stand at better advantage to find truth, and keep it also, when devoutly praying for it, then fiercely wrangling and contending about it; disputes toy the soul, and raise the dust of passion; prayer sweetly composeth the mind, and layes the passions which disputes draw forth; and I am sure a man may see further in a still clear day, than in a windy and cloudy. When a person talks much, and rests little, we have great cause to fear his brain will not long hold, and truly when a person shall be much in talking and disputing about truth, without a humble spirit in prayer to be led into it; God may justly punish that mans pride with a spiritual frenzy in his mind, that he shall not know error from truth.

6. Sixthly, look thou takest not offence at the difference of judgements and opinions that are found amongst the professors of Religion. It is a stone which the Papist throws (in these divided times especially) before our feet. How know you, saith he, which is truth, when there are so many judgements, and wayes amongst you? some have so stumbled at this, that they have quit the truth they once profest, and by the storm of dissensions in matters of Religion, have been, if not thrown upon the rock of Atheism, yet driven to and fro in a fluctuation of mind, not willing to cast anchor any where in their judgement till they see this tempest over; and those that are scattered from one another by diversity of judgement, meet together in an unity, and joynt consent of perswasions in matters of Religion. A resolution, as one saith very well, as foolish and pernicious to the soul, if not more than it would be to the body, if a man should vow he would not eat till all the Clocks in the City should strike twelve just together; The latter might sooner be expected than the former.

7. Seventhly, Rest not till thou feelest the efficacy of every truth thou holdest in thy judgement, upon thy heart; One faculty helps another. The more clear truth is in the understanding, the more abiding in the memory; and the more operative truth is on the will, the more fixed in the judgement. Let a thing be never so excellent, yet if a man can make little or no use thereof, it is little worth to him, and may easily be got from him.

Thus

Thus many rare Libraries have been parted with by rude souldiers (into whose hands they have fallen) for little more than their covers were worth, which would by some (that could have improved them) been kept as the richest prize. And verily, it fares with truth, according as they are into whose hands it falls; if it lights upon one that falls to work with it, and draws out the strength and sweetness of it, this man holds it so much faster in his judgement, by how much more operative it is on his heart: but if it meets with one that finds no divine efficacy it hath, to humble, comfort, sanctifie him, it may soon be turned out of doors, and put to seek for a new Host; such may for a time dance about that light, which a while after themselves will blow out. When I hear of a man, that once held original sinne, and the universal pollution of mans nature to be a truth; but now denies it, I cannot but fear, he did either never lay it so close his heart, as to abase and humble him kindly for it; or that he grew weary of the work, and by sloath and negligence lost the efficacy of that truth in his heart, before he lost the truth it self in his judgment. I might instance in many other particulars, wherein professors in these rowling times have slid from their old principles. Singing of *Psalms* hath been a duty own'd and practised by many, who now have laid it down; and it were a question worth the asking of them, whether formerly they never enjoyed sweet communion with God in that duty as well as in others? whether their hearts did never dance and leap up to God with heavenly affections, while they sing with their lips? And verily I should think it strange to hear a godly person deny this. Well, if ever thou didst (Christian) meet with God at this door of the Tabernacle (for I cannot yet think it other,) let me ask thee again, whether thy heart did not grow common, cold, and formal in the duty, before thou durst cast off the duty? and if so, (which I am very ready to believe:) I desire such in the fear of God to consider these four Questions.

1 Joh. 2.23, 24.

First, whether they may not fear that they are in an error; and that this darkness is befallen their judgments, as a punishment for their negligence and slightness of spirit, in performing the duty, when they did not question the lawfulness of it?

I.

Secondly, whether it were not better they labour'd to recover the first liveliness of their affections in the duty (which would soon bring

2.

bring them again acquainted with that sweetness and joy they of old found in it) than to cast it off, upon so weak evidence as they who can say most, bring in against it?

3- Thirdly, whether such as neglect one duty, are likely to thrive by any other, and keep up the favour of them fresh in their souls?

4- Fourthly, whether, if God should suffer them decline in their affections to any other ordinance, (which he forbid if it be his will,) it were not as easie for Satan to gather together arguments enough to make them scruple, and in time cast off that also as well as this? And that there is reason for such a question, these times will tell us; wherein every Ordinance hath had its turn to be questioned, yea, disowned, some by one, some by another, one will not sing, another will not have his child baptized; a third will not have any water baptism, nor Supper neither; a fourth bungs up his ear too from all hearing of the Word; and would have us expect an immediate teaching. Thus when once Ordinances and Truths become dead to us through our miscarriage under them, we can be willing (how beautiful soever they were once in our eye) yea, call to have them buried out of our sight. These things sadly laid to heart, will give you reason to think, though this direction be placed last in order of my discourse, yet it should not find neither the last nor least place (among all the other named) in your Christian care and practice.



CHAP.



CHAP. IV.

Wherein is contained the second way of having our loynes girt with truth, viz. so as to make a free and bold profession of it, and why this is our duty; and a short Exhortation to it.

THE second way that truth is assaulted, is by force and violence the Devil pieceth the foxes skin of seducers, with the Lyons skin of persecutors. The bloodiest tragedies in the world, have been acted on the stage of the Church; and the most inhumane massacres and butcheries committed on the harmlesse sheep of Christ. The first man that was slain in the world was a Sainr, and he for Religion. And as *Luther* said, *Cain* will kill *Abel* unto the end of the world. The fire of persecution can never go out quite, so long as there remains a spark of hatred in the wicked's bosome on earth, or a Devil in hell to blow it up. Therefore there is a second way of having truth girt about the Christians loynes, as necessary as the other, and that is in the profession of it. Many that could never be beaten from the truth by dint of argument, have been forced from it by fire of persecution. 'Tis not an Orthodox judgement will enable a man to suffer for the truth at the stake; Then that poor *Smith* in our *English* Martyrology, would not have sent such a dastard-like answer to his friend, ready to suffer for that truth, which he himself had been a means to instruct him in; that indeed it was the truth, but he could not burn. Truth in the head without holy courage, makes a man like the Sword-fish, which *Plutarch* saith, hath *αὐχλὸν ἀνὰ τὸ ὤψιστον*, a Sword in the

the head, but no heart to use it. Then a person becomes unconquerable, when from heaven he is endued with a holy boldness, to draw forth the Sword of the Spirit, and own the naked truth, by a free profession of it in the face of death and danger. This is to have our loynes girt about with truth. So that the Note from this second kind of girding with Truth, is,

Doct.

Doct. That it is the Saints duty, and should be their care, not only to get an establish'd judgement in the truth, but also to maintain a stedfast profession of the truth. This the Apostle presseth, *Heb. 10. 23. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.* He speaks it in opposition to those, who in those hazardous times declin'd the Assemblies of the Saints, for fear of persecution; he calls it a *wavering*, and he that staggers, is next door to Apostasie. We must not spread our sails of profession in a calm, and firlie them up when the wind riseth. *Pergamus* is commended, *Rev. 2. 13. for her bold profession, I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan hath his Throne, and thou holdest fast my Name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antypas was my faithful Martyr, who was slain among you.* It was a place where Satan late in the Magistrates fear, where it was *grande satis piaculum mortem mereri, Christianum esse*, matter enough to deserve death to be a Christian; yea, some blood now was shed before their eyes, and even in those dayes they denyed not the truth. This God took kindly. 'Tis a strict charge. *Paul* gives *Timothy*, *1 Epist. 6. 11. But thou O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, &c.* while others are proling for the world, lay about thee for spiritual riches, pursue this with as hot a chase as they do their temporal. But, what if this trade cannot be peaceably driven? must shop-windows then be shut up, profession laid aside, and he stay to be religious, till more favourable times come about? No such matter, *ver. 12.* He bids him *fight the good fight of faith*; do not barely quit thy profession, but lay life and all to stake to keep this; and that he might engage him beyond a retreat, see *ver. 13. I charge thee in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things; and Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this Commandment; as if he had said, if ever you*
will

will see the face of Christ with comfort at the Resurrection (who chose to lose his life, rather than deny or dissemble the truth) stand to it, and flinch not from your Colours. *Augustine* in his *confess.* 1 b. 8. cap. 2. hath a notable story of one *Vilforinus*, (famous in *Rome* for Rhetorique which he taught the *Senators*) This man in his old Age was converted to Christianity, and came to *Simplicianus* (one eminent at that time for his piety) whispering in his ears softly these words, *Ego sum Christianus, I am a Christian*; But this holy man answered, *Non credo, nec deputabo te inter Christianos nisi in Ecclesia Christi te videro. I will not believe it, or count thee so, till I see thee among the Christians in the Church*; at which he laughed, saying, *Ergo parietes faciunt Christianum?* Do then those walls make a Christian? cannot I be such, except I openly profess it, and let the world know the same? This he said for fear, being yet but a young Convert, though an old man; but a while after (when he was more confirmed in the faith, and seriously considered, that if he should continue thus ashamed of Christ, he would be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels) he changed his Note, and came to *Simplicianus*, saying, *Ecce sum in Ecclesiam, Christianus volo fieri. Let us go to the Church, I will now in earnest be a Christian.* And there though a private profession of his faith might have been accepted, chose to do it openly, saying, That he had openly professed Rhetorick, which was not a matter of salvation, and should he be afraid to own the Word of God in the Congregation of the faithful? God requires both the Religion of the heart and mouth, *Rom. 10. 10. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Confession of the mouth without faith in the heart, is gross hypocrisie; to pretend faith without profession of the mouth, is both hypocrisie and cowardize.

Reas. I shall give but one Reason of the Point, and that is taken from the great trust which God puts in his Saints concerning his truth; this is the great *depositum* which God delivers to his Saints with a strict and solemn charge to keep against all that undermine or oppose it. Some things we trust God with, some things God trusts us with. The great thing which we put into Gods hand to be kept for us, is our soul, *2 Tim. 1. 12. He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

day. That which God trusts us chiefly with, is his truth. It is therefore said to be delivered to them, as a charge of money to a friend whom we confide in, *Jude 3. Contend for the faith which was once delivered to the Saints. To them (saith the Apostle, speaking of the Jews) were committed the Oracles of God, Rom. 3. 2. They were credited with that heavenly treasure. So Paul exhorts Timothy, Ephes. 1. chap. 1. To hold fast the form of sound words; and this ver. 14. he calls the good thing which was committed to him. If he that is entrusted with the keeping of a Kings Crown and Jewels, ought to look carefully to his charge, that none be lost or stolen, much more the Christian that hath in his charge Gods Crown and Treasure. Rob God of his truth, and what hath he left? The word of truth is that testimony which the great God gives of himself to man. The Saints are his chosen Witnesses above others, whom he calls forth to vouch his truth, by a free and holy profession thereof before men (call'd therefore the Witnesses of God.) He that maintains any Error from the Word, bears false Witness against God. He that for fear or shame deserts the truth, or dissembles his profession, he denies God his testimony, and who can express what a bloody sin this is, and to what a high contempt of God it amounts? It were a horrid crime though but in a mans case. As when one is falsely accused in a Court, to speak something that might clear the innocency of the man, and yet should suffer him to be condemned, rather than hazard himself a litle by speaking the truth in open Court. O, what then is his sin, that when God himself in his truth, stands at sorry mans Bar, dares not speak for God when call'd in to declare himself, but lets truth suffer by an unjust sentence that himself may not at mans hands for bearing Witness to it?*

Object.

Object. But this may seem too heavy a burden to lay on the Christians back; must we lay all at stake, and hazard all that is dear to us, rather than deny, or dissemble our profession of the truth? Sure Christ will have but few followers, if he holds his servants to such hard terms.

Ans.

Ans. Indeed 'tis hard to flesh and blood, one of the highest stiles to be gone over in our way to Heaven; a carnal heart cannot hear this, but he is offended presently. Therefore such as are loth to lose Heaven, and yet unwilling to venture thus much for it,

Psal. 119. 7.
Esay 8. 10.
Hebr. 12. 1.
Rev. 11. 3.

Math. 13. 21.

it, have set their wits a work to find out an easier way thither. Hence those Hereticks of old, *Priscillianists*, and others (whose chief Religion was to save their own skin) made little of outward profession. They thought they might say, and unsay; swear, and forswear (according to their wretched principle, *Juro, per-juro, mentem injuratam gero*;) so in their heart they did but cleave to the truth. O what fools were the *Prophets*, *Apostles*, and other holy *Martyrs*, that have seal'd to the truth with their blood, if there might have been such a fair way of escaping the storm of persecution? Bold men, that to save a little trouble from man, for truths sake, durst invent such detestable blasphemies against the truth; yea, deface those characters which nature it self engraves upon the Conscience. The same window that let in the light of a Deity, would with it let in this also, that we should walk in the Name of this God; the very *Heathen* know this. *All people will walk, ev'ry one in the Name of his God*, Micah 4. *Socrates* to blood held, there was but one God; and in his *Apology* for his life, said, *If they would give him his life, on condition to keep this truth to himself, and not teach it to others, he would not accept it*; Behold here the powerful workings of a natural Conscience! Have not they then improv'd the knowledge of the Scripture well, in the mean time, that are so far out-shot from natures weak Bow? Religion would soon vanish into an empty nothing, if for fear of every one we meet, we must (like run-away Souldiers) pluck off our Colours, and put our profession as it were in our Pockets, lest we should be known to whom we belong. What doth God require by a free profession of his truth, more than a Master doth of his Servant, when he bids him take his Livery, and follow him in the streets? Or when a Prince calls his Subjects into the Field, to declare their Loyalty, by owning his quarrel against an invading Enemy? And is it reasonable, what man requires of these, and only hard from Gods hands? nay, 'tis not more, nor so much as we desire of God for our selves. Who would not have God make profession of his love to us, and bear Witness for us against Satan and our own sins, at that great day when men and Angels shall be Spectators? And shall we expect that from God, which he owes us by no Law, but of his own free promise, and deny him that which we are under so many Bonds to pay? if it be but in some affli-

tion (while we are here) how disconsolate are we, if Gods face be a little overcast, and he doth not own us in our distress? And is there no kindness to be shewn to that God that knows your soul in adversity? When his truth is in an agony, may not Christ look, that all his Friends should sit up and watch with it? O! it were shame with a witness, that any such effeminate delicacy should be found among Christs Servants, that they cannot break a little of their worldly rest and enjoyments, to attend on him and his truth.

Use.

Use. Let this stir us up to get the Girdle of truth close girt to us, that we may be able to hold fast the profession of it, even in the face of death and danger, and not be offended when persecution ariseth. Blessed be God, 'tis not yet come to that, we have the truth at a cheaper Rate; but how soon the Market may rise, we know not. Truth is not alwayes to be had at the same price. Buy it we must at any, but sell it upon no terms. And let me tell you, there hath, is, and will be a spirit of persecution in the hearts of the wicked, to the end of the World; and as Satan was considering *Job*, before he laid his foul hands on him, so now persecution is working in the spirits of the ungodly; there are Engines of death continually preparing in the thoughts and desires of Satan and his instruments, against the sincere Professors of the truth; 'tis already resolv'd upon what they would do, might power be given, and opportunity, to put their malice in execution; yea, we are half-way already towards a persecution. Satan comes first with a spirit of error, and then of persecution; he first corrupts mens minds with error, and then enrageth their hearts with wrath against the Professors of truth. It is impossible, that error being a B at of Hell, should be peaceable, it would not then be like its father. That which is from beneath, can neither be pure nor peaceable. And how far God hath suffered this sulphurous spirit of error to prevail, is so notorious, that no Apology is broad enough to cover the nakedness of these unhappy times. It is therefore high time to have our Girdle of truth on, yea, close girt about us in the profession of it. Not every one that now applauds truth will follow it, when once it comes to shew them the way to Prison; not every one that preacheth for it, or disputes for it, will suffer for it. Arguments are harmless things, blunt weapons, they fetch no blood; but when we suffer, then we

we are called to try it with truths Enemies at sharps. This requires something more than a nimble tongue, a sharp wit, and a logical head : Where then will be the wise, the disputer, the men of parts and gifts ? Alas, they will (like cowardly Souldiers) be wanting in the Fight, though they could be as forward as the best at a Muster, or Training, when no Enemy was in the Field; when to appear for truth, was rather a matter of gain or applause, than loss and hazard. No, God hath chosen the foolish to confound the wise in this piece of Service ; the humble Christian by his faith, patience, and love to the truth, to shame men of high parts, and no grace.



C H A P. V.

A Direction or two for the girding of Truth close to us in the profession of it.

BUt how may a Soul get to be thus girt with truth in the profession of it ?

First, Labour to get an heart enflamed with a sincere love to the truth, this is only able to match the Enemies of truth. The worst they can do is Bonds or Death, and *Love is stronger than Death*, it kills the very heart of Death it self, it makes all easie. Commandments are not grievous to love, nor doth it complain of sufferings. With what a light heart did *Jacob*, for the love of *Rachel*, endure the heat of the day, and cold of the night ? 'Tis *venterous* ; *Jonathan* threw a Kingdom at his Heels, and conflicted with the anger of an enraged Father for *David's* sake, love never thinks it self a loser, so long as it keeps its beloved ; yea, 'tis ambitious of any hazardous enterprize, whereby it may sacrifice

Quest.

Ans.

sacrifice it self in the service of its beloved, as we see in *David* who put his life in his hands for *Michal*; how much more when our love is pitcht upon so transcendent an object as *Christ* and his truth! Alas, they are but faint spirits, which are breath'd from a Creature, weak beams that are shot from such sorry beauties. If these lay their lovers under such a Law, that they cannot but obey, though with the greatest peril and hazard; what constraint then must a soul ravish't with the love of *Christ* be under? This has made the Saints leap out of their Estates, Relations; yea, out of their bodies with joy, counting it not their loss to part with them, but to keep them with the least prejudice to the truth. *Rev.* 12. 11. its said there, *They loved not their lives unto the death.* Mark, not to the loss of some of their comforts of their lives, but to death; life it self they counted an Enemy, when it would part them and truth. As a man doth not love his Arm or Leg, when it hazards the rest, but bids, cut it off. Cannot we live (say these noble spirits) but to the clouding of truth, and calling our love to it and *Christ* into question? welcome then the worst of deaths. This kept up *David's* Courage when his life was laid for, *Psal.* 119. 95. *The wicked have waited for me to destroy me, but I will consider thy Testimonies.* A carnal heart would have considered his Estate, Wife and Children, or at least his Life now in danger; but *David's* heart was on a better Subject; he considered the testimonies of God, and so much sweetness pours in upon his soul, while he is rowling them in his meditation, that he cannot hold. *O how I love thy law,* ver. 97. This made him set light by all the troubles he met with for his cleaving to the truth. It is a great mystery to the World, that men for an opinion (as they call it) should run such desperate hazard. Therefore *Paul* was thought by his Judge, to be out of his wits. And that question which *Pilate* askt *Christ*, seems rather to be slightly, than seriously spoken, *John* 18. Our Saviour had told him, ver. 27. that the end why he was born, and came into the world, was, that he should bear witness to the truth. Then *Pilate*, ver. 38. asks *Christ*, what is truth? and presently flings away, as if he had said, Is this now a time to think of truth, when thy life is in danger? What is truth, that thou shouldst venture so much for it? But a gracious soul may better ask in a holy scorn,

scorn, What are Riches and Honours? what the fading pleasures of this cheating World? yea, what is life it self, that any, or all these should be set in opposition to truth? O Sirs, look what has your love, that will command Purse, Credit, Life and all. *Amor meus pondus meum*, every man goes where his love carries him. If the World has your love, on it you will spend your lives; if truth has your hearts, you will catch the blow that is made at in your own breasts, rather than let it fall on it. Only be careful that your love to truth be sincere, or else it will leave you at the Prison door, and make you part with truth, when you should most appear for it. Three sorts of pretenders to truth, their love is not like to endure the fiery trial.

First, Such as embrace truth for carnal advantage. Some times truth payes well for her boord in the Worlds own coyn, and so long every one will invite her to his house. These do not love truth, but the jewel at her ear. Many were observ'd in *Hen. 8.* his time, to be very zealous against Abbies, that lov'd their Lands, more than they hated their Idolatry. Truth finds few that love her *gratis*. And those few only will suffer with truth and for it; as for the other, when the worldly dowry, that truth brought, be once spent, you will find they are weary of their match. This Kirchin fire burns no longer than such gross fewel of Profit, Credit, and the like, does feed it. If you cannot love naked truth, you will not fadge to go naked for truth. If you cannot love disgraced truth, you will not endure to be disgraced for truth; and what usage truth finds, that her followers must expect.

Secondly, Such who commend truth, and cry it up highly; but if you mark them, they do but complement with it, all this while they keep at a distance, and do not suffer truth to come within them, so as to give Law unto them. Like one that entertains a Suitor, speaks well of him, holds Discourse with him, but will not hear of marrying him. It is one thing φιλεῖν, another καταφιλεῖν. *Bucholcerus* would oft say, *Multis osculatur Christum, pauci vero amant*; many kiss Christ, but few love him. True love to Christ is conjugal; when a soul delivers up it self from an inward liking it hath to Christ, as to her Husband, to be ruled by his Spirit, and ordered by his Word of truth,

here

here is a Soul loves Christ and his truth; but where truth has no Command, and bears no Rule, there dwells no love to truth in that heart. She that is not obedient, cannot be a loving Wife, because love would constrain her to be so, and so would love in the Soul enforce obedience to the truth it loves. Nay, he that doth not obey truth, is so far from loving it, that he is afraid of truth; and he that is slavishly afraid of truth, will sooner prove a persecutor of truth, than a sufferer for truth. So true is that of *Hierome*, *Quem metuit quis odit, quem odit perire cupit*; whom we fear, we hate; whom we hate, we wish they were destroyed. *Saul* fear'd *David*, and that made him more industriously seek his Ruine. *Herod* fear'd *John*, and that cost him his life; slavish fear makes the naughty heart imprison truth in his conscience, because if that had its liberty and authority in the Soul, it would imprison, yea, execute every lust that now rules the Rost; and he that imprisons truth in his own bosome, will hardly lie in Prison himself as a Witness for truth.

3. Thirdly, Such as have no zeal against truths Enemies. Love goes ever arm'd with zeal, this is her Dagger she draws against all the opposers of truth. *Qui non zelat, non amat*; He that is not zealous, doth not love. Now right zeal acts (like fire) *ad ultimum sui posse*, to its utmost power (yet ever keeping its place and sphere.) If it be confined to the breast of a private Christian, whence it may not flame forth in punishing truths Enemies, then it burns inwardly the more (for being pent up) and preys (like a fire in his bones) upon the Christians own spirits, consuming them, yea, eating him up for grief, to see truth trod under foot of error or profaneness, and he not able to help it up. 'Tis no joy to a zealous lover to out-live his beloved, such there have been, who could have chose rather to have leapt into their Friends Grave, and lain down with them in the dust, than here pass a disconsolate life without them. *Let us go and dye with him*, said *Thomas*, when Christ told them *Lazarus* was dead; and I am sure zealous lovers of truth count it as melancholy living in evil times, when that is fallen in the streets. The News of the *Arks* taking frightened good *Eli's* soul out of his body; and this may charitably be thought to have given life to *Elijah's* wish, yea, solemn prayer for death, 1 *King's*

19. 4. *It is enough, take away my life*; the holy man saw how things went among the great ones of those wicked times; Idolaters they were Courtied, and the faithful Servants of God Carted (as I may so say) yea, killed; and now this zealous Prophet thinks it a good time to leave the World in, rather than live in torment any longer, to see the Name, Truth, and Servants of God trampled on, by those who should have shewn most kindness to them. But if zeal hath any power put into her hands, wherein she may vindicate truths cause (as when she is exalted into the *Magistrates* Seat) then truths enemies shall know and feel, that *she bears not the Sword in vain*. The zealous *Magistrate* will have, as an Arm to relieve and defend truth, the *Israelite*; so a hand to smite blasphemy, error, and profaneness, the *Egyptian*, when any of them assault her. O how *Moses* laid about him (that meek man, who stood so mute in his own cause, *Numb. 12.*) when the people had committed Idolatry! his heart was so inflamed within him, that (as well as he loved them) he could neither open his mouth in a prayer for them to God, nor his ear to receive any petition from them, till he had given vent to his zeal in an act of justice upon the offenders. Now such, and such only are the persons that are likely (when called) to suffer for the truth, who will not let it suffer if they can help it. But as for natural *Gallio* like spirits, that can see truth and error scuffling, and not do their utmost to relieve truth, by interposing their power and authority, if a *Magistrate*; by preaching the one up, and the other down, if a *Minister*; and by a free testimony to, fervent prayer for, and affectionate sympathizing with truth (as it fares ill or well) if a private Christian; I say, as for such, who stand in this case (as some Spectators about two Wrestlers) not caring much who hath the fall. These are not the men that can be expected to expose themselves to much suffering for truth. That *Magistrate* who hath not zeal enough to stop the mouths of truths Enemies when he may; will he open his mouth in a free profession of it when death and danger face him? That *Minister*, who hath neither love nor courage enough to apologize for truth in the *Pulpit*; can it be thought he would stand to her defence at a *stake*? In a word, That private Christian whose heart is not wounded through truths sides, so as to sympathize with it, will he interpose himself betwixt truth and the blow that bloody

Persecutors make at it, and choose to receive it into his own body (though to death) rather than it should light on truth? if the fire of love within be out, or so little, that it will not melt the man into sorrow for the wrongs done to truth by men of corrupt minds, where will the flame be found, that should enable him to burn to ashes, under the hand of bloody men; hee'll never endure the fire in his body, that hath no more care to keep that sacred fire burning in his Soul; if he cannot shed tears, much less will he blood for *Truth*.

Quest.

Quest. If any now should ask how they may get their hearts enflamed with this heavenly fire of love to truth? I answer, first,

Ans.

Ans. 1. Labour for an inward conformity of thy heart to truth. Likeness is the ground of love. A carnal heart cannot like truth, because it is not like to truth. Such a one may love truth, as he did *Alexander*, *Regem non Alexandrum*. *The King, not the person that was King*. Truth in its honour and dignity, when it can prefer him, but not naked truth it self. How is it possible, an earthly Soul should love truth that is heavenly? an unholy heart, truth that is pure? O 'tis sad indeed, when mens Tenets and principles in their understandings do clash, and fight with the principles of their hearts and affections; when men have orthodox judgments, and heterodox hearts! There must needs be little love to truth, because the judgment and will are so unequally yok'd. Truth in the Conscience reproving and threatening lust in the heart, and that again controlling truth in the Conscience. Thus like a scolding couple, they may awhile dwell together, but taking no content in one another, the wretch is easily perswaded to give *Truth* a Bill of Divorce at last, and send her away (as *Ahashuerus* did *Vashti*) that he may espouse other principles, which will suit better with his corrupt heart, and not cross him in the way he is in. This, this I am perswaded hath parted many and truth in these licentious dayes. They could not sin peaceably while they kept their judgments sound; Truth ever and anon would be chiding them, and therefore to march their judgments with their hearts, they have taken up principles futable to their lusts. But Soul, if truth had such a power

power upon thee to transform thee (by the renewing of thy mind) into its own likeness; that as the sence turns the stock into its own nature, so truth hath assimilated thee, and made thee bear fruit like it self; Thou art the person that will never part with truth; before thou canst do this, thou must part with that new nature, which by it the Spirit of God hath begot in thee. There is now such a near union betwixt thee and truth, or rather thee and Christ, as can never be broke. We see what a mighty power there goes along with Gods Ordinance of Marriage, that two persons, who possibly a Month before never knew one another; yet their affections once knit by love, and their persons made one by Marriage, they can now leave Friends and Parents for to enjoy each other; such a mighty power, and much greater goes along with this mystical Marriage between the Soul and Christ, the Soul and truth; that the same person who before conversion, would not have ventured the loss of a penny for Christ, or his truth; yet now (knit to Christ and his truth by a secret work of the Spirit, new forming him into the likeness thereof) he can bid adieu to the world, life, and all for these. As that *Martyr* told him, that askt whether he did not love his Wife and Children, and was not loth to part with them? *Yes*; saith he, *I love them so dearly, that I would not part with any of them for all that the Duke of Brunswick is worth* (whose Subject he was) *But for Christs sake and his truth, farewell to them all.*

Secondly, Labour to get thy heart more and more inflred with the love of God, and this will work in thee a dear love to his truth: Love observes what is precious and dear to its beloved, and loves it for his sake. *Dauids* love to *Jonathan* made him enquire for some of his Race, that he might shew kindness to for his sake. Love to God will make the soul inquisitive to find out what is near and dear to God, that by shewing kindness to it, he may express his love to him. Now upon a little search, we shall find that the great God sets a very high price upon the head of truth, *Psal. 138. 2. Thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy Name.* That is Gods Name by which he is known, every Creature hath Gods Name upon it; by it God is known, even to the least pile of Grass; but to his Word and truth therein

written, he hath given preheminence above all other things that bear his Name. Take a few considerations whereby we may a little conceive of the high value God sets of truth. *First*, God when he vouchsafeth his Word and truth to a people, he makes account he gives them one of the greatest mercies they can receive, or he give; he calls them *the great things of his Law*, *Hof. 8. 12.* A people that enjoy his truth, they are by Christs own judgment *lift up to Heaven*; whatever a people have at Gods hands, without this, bears no more comparison with it, than *Hagars* loaf of bread and bottle (which was *Ishmaels* portion) would with *Isaacs* inheritance. God that knows how to prize, and rate his own gifts, saith of his Word which he *sheweth to Jacob*, and testimonies that he gives to *Israel*, that he hath not dealt so with any Nation, *Psal. 147. 20.* That is, not so richly and graciously. *Secondly*, Consider Gods especial care to preserve his truth; whatever is lost, God looks to his truth. In shipwracks at Sea, and scare-fires at Land, when men can save but little, they use to choose not lumber, and things of no worth, but what they esteem most precious. In all the great revolutions, changes, and overturning of Kingdoms, and Churches also, God hath still preserv'd his truth. Thousands of Saints lives have been taken away, but that which the Devil spights more than all the Saints; yea, which alone he spights them for (that is the truth) this lives, and shall to triumph over his malice; and sure if truth were not very dear to God, he would not be at this cost to keep it with the blood of his Saints; yea, which is more, the blood of his Son; whose Errand into the world was by life and death *to bear witness to the truth*, *John 18. 37.* In a word, in that great and dismal conflagration of Heaven and Earth, when the Elements shall melt for heat, and the World come to its fatal period, then truth shall not suffer the least loss, but *the Word of the Lord endureth for ever*, *1 Pet. 1. last verse.* *Thirdly*, Consider the severity of God to the Enemies of truth. A dreadful Curse is denounced against those that shall *take away from it, or add the least to it*, that embase, or clip this heavenly Coyn, *Rev. 22. 18.* The one pulls upon him all *the plagues that are written in the Word of truth*; from the other shall be taken away *his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy City, and from the things* (that is, the good things of the promises) *which are*

are written in this Book, All these speak at what a high Rate God values truth; and no wonder, if we consider what truth is (that truth which shines forth from the written Word) It is the extract of Gods thoughts and counsels which from everlasting he rook up, and had in his heart to effect. Nothing comes to pass but as an accomplishment of this his Word; it is the most full and perfect representation that God himself could give of his own being, and nature to the sons of men; that by it we might know him, and love him. Great Princes use to send their Pictures by their Embassadors, to those whom they wooe for Marriage. God is such an infinite perfection, that no hand can draw him forth to life but his own, and this he hath done exactly in his Word, from which all his Saints have come to be enamoured with him. As we deal with truth, so we do with God himself; he that despiseth that, despiseth him. He that abandons the truth of God, renounceth the God of truth: Though men cannot come to pull God out of his Throne, and un-god him, yet they come as near this as it is possible, when they let out their wrath against the truth, in this they do, as it were, execute God in effigie. There is Reason we see, why God should so highly prize his truth, and that we that love him shou'd cleave to it.

Thirdly, Be much in the meditation of the transcendent excellency of truth, *The eye affects the heart*; this is the window at which love enters. Never any that had a spiritual eye to see truth in her native beauty, but had a heart to love her. This was the way that Davids heart was ravish'd with the love of the Word of truth, *Psal. 119.96. O how I love thy Law, it is my meditation all the day*; while his thoughts were on it, his love was drawn to it; David found a great difference berwixt meditating on the truths of Gods Word, and other excellencies which the World cryes up so highly; when he goes to entertain himself with the thoughts of some perfection in the Creature, he finds it but a jejune, dry subject compar'd with this; he soon tumbles over the book of the Worlds excellencies, and can find no notion that deserves any long stay upon it, *I have seen*, saith he, *an end of all perfections*; he is at the Worlds end presently, and in a few thoughts can see to the bottom of all the Worlds glory; but when he takes up the truths of God into his thoughts, now he meets

meets with work enough for his admiration, and sweet meditation; *Thy Commandment is exceeding broad*; great Ships cannot sail in narrow Rivers, and shallow waters; neither can minds truly great with the knowledge of God and Heaven, find room enough in the Creature to turn, and expatiate themselves in. A gracious Soul is soon aground, and at a stand, when upon these flats; but let it launch out into the mediation of God, his Word, the mysterious truths of the Gospel, and he finds a place of *broad waters*, Sea-room enough to lose himself in: I might here shew you the excellency of Divine truths from many Heads, as from the source and spring-head whence they flow, the God of truth; from their opposite, that mishapen Monster, *Error*, &c. But I shall only direct your meditation to a few *enamouring properties* which you shall find in these *truths*; you may meet a heap of them together in *Psal. 19. 7.* and so on. *Truth* it is *pure*, this made *David* love it, *Psal. 119. 140.* It is not only pure, but makes the Soul pure and holy that embraceth it. *Sanctifie them through thy truth, thy Word is truth*, John 17. 17. It is the pure water that God washeth foul Souls clean with, *Ex. 4. 36. 25.* *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness will I cleanse you*; foul puddle water will as soon make the face, as *Error* make the Soul clean. *Truth* is *sure*, and hath a firm bottom, *Psal. 19. 7.* We may lay the whole weight of our Souls upon it, and yet not crack under us; cleave to truth, and it will stick to thee. It will go with thee to prison, banishment, yea, stake it self, and bear thy charges wherever thou goest upon her Errand. *Not one thing, said Jotham, hath fail'd of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, not one thing hath failed thereof*, *Joth. 24. 14.* Whatever you find there promis'd, count it money in your purse; *Four score years, said Polycarp, I have served God, and found him a good Master.* But when men think by forsaking the truth to provide well for themselves, they are sure to meet with disappointments. Many have been flatter'd from truth with goodly promises, and then serv'd no better than *Judas* was by the *Jews*, after he had betray'd his *Master* into their bloody hands, *look thee to that.* Though persecutors love the Treason, yet they hate the Traytor; yea oft (to shew their devilish malice) they, when some have been got to wound their

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Conscience by denying the truth, have most cruelly butchered them, and glory'd in it, as a full revenge to destroy Soul and body together. *Again truth is free, and makes the Soul free that cleaves to it, John 8. 32. The truth shall make you free.* Christ tells the Jews of a bondage they were in (which that bragge people never dream'd on) *ver. 44. It is of your father the Devil, and his lusts you will do;* such slaves are all sinners, they must do what the Devil will have them, and dare no more displease him, than a child his father with a Rod in his hand. Some Witches have confest, that they have been forced to send out their *imps* to do mischief to others, that they might have ease themselves; for till they did send them abroad upon such an errand, they were themselves tormented by them. And he who hath a lust sucking on him, finds as little rest, if he be not alwayes serving of it, and making provision for it: Can the world, think you, shew such another slave as this poor wretch is? **well,* though all the bolts that the Devil hath (lusts I mean) were lockt upon one sinner, and he shut up in the closest Dungeon of all his prison, yet let but this poor slave begin to be acquainted with the truth of Christ, so as to open his heart to it, and close with it: You shall soon hear that the foundations of the prison are shaken, its doors thrown open, and the chains fallen off the poor creatures leggs: Truth cannot it self be bound, nor will it dwell in a Soul that lies bound in sins prison; and therefore when once truth and the Soul are agreed, or rather Christ and the Soul, who are brought together by truth, then the poor creature may lift up his Heart with joy, for his Redemption and Joyle-delivery from this spiritual bondage draws nigh; yea, the day is come, the key is in the lock already to let him out. It's impossible we should be acquainted with truth (as it is in Jesus) and be meer strangers to this liberty that attends it, *Ephes. 4. 19, 20, 21.* In a word, *Lastly, Truth is victorious.* 'Tis great, and shall prevail at last. 'Tis the great counsel of God, and though many fine plots and devices are found in the hearts of men (which shew what they would do) yet the counsel of the Lord shall stand; all their Eggs are add; when they have set longest on them; alas, they want power to hatch what their malice sets brooding on. Sometimes I confest the Enemies to Truth get the *Militia*

of

of this lower World into their hands, and then truth seems to go to the ground, and those that witness to it are even slain; yet then 'tis more than their Persecutors can do, to get them laid under ground in their Grave, *Revel. II. 9.* Some (that were never thought on) shall strike in on truths side, and forbid the burial. Persecutors need not be at cost for Marble to write the memorial of their Victories in, dust will serve well enough, for they are not like to last so long. *Three dayes and a half* the Witnesses may lie dead in the streets, and truth sit disconsolate by them; but within awhile they are walking, and truth triumphing again. If Persecutors could kill their Successors, then their work might be thought to stand strong, needing not to fear another to pull down what they set up; and yet then their work would lie as open to Heaven, and might be as easily hindered, as theirs at *Babel*. Who loves not to be on the winning side? choose truth for thy side, and thou hast it. News may come that truth is sick, but never that it is dead. No, 'tis Error is short-lived, *a lying tongue is but for a moment*; but truths Age runs parallel with Gods Eternity. It shall live to see their Heads laid in the dust, and to walk over their Graves, that were so busie to make one for her. Live, did I say? yea, Reign in peace with those who now are willing to suffer with, and for it. And wouldest thou not (Christian) be one among that goodly Train of Victors, who shall attend on Christs Triumphant Chariot into the heavenly City, there to take the Crown, and sit down in thy Throne with those that have kept the Field, when Christ and his truth were Militant here on Earth? Thus wouldest thou but in thy thoughts wipe away tears and blood, which now cover the face of suffering truth, and present it to thy eye, as it shall look in glory, thou couldest not but cleave to it with a love stronger than death.

2.

But Secondly, If yet there remains any qualm of fear on thy heart from the wrath of bloody men threatening thee for thy profession of the truth, than to a heart inflamed with the love of truth, labour to add a heart fill'd with the fear of that wrath, which God hath in store for all that Apostatize from the truth. When you chance to burn your finger,

ger, you hold it to the fire, which being a greater fire draws out the other. Thus when thy thoughts are scorcht, and thy heart feared with the fire of mans wrath, hold them a while to hell fire, which God hath prepared for the fearful; *Revel. 21. 8.* and all that run away from Truths colours, *Heb. 10. 39.* and thou wilt lose the sense of the one for fear of the other; *Ignosce Imperator* (said the holy man,) *in Carcerem, Deus Gehennam minatur*; Pardon me O Emperour, if I obey not thy command; thou threatnest a Prison, but Gods a Hell. Observable is that of *David*, *Psalms 119. 161.* *Princes have persecuted me without a cause, but my heart standeth in awe of thy words.* He had no cause to fear them, that had no cause to persecute him; one threatening out of the Word (that sets the point of Gods wrath to his heart) scares him more, than the worst that the greatest on earth can do to him. Mans wrath (also) when hottest, is but a temperate climate, to the wrath of the living God. They who have felt both, have testified as much. Mans wrath cannot hinder the access of Gods love to the creature, which hath made the Saints sing in the fire, in spite of their enemies teeth. But the creature under Gods wrath, is like one shut up in a close Oven, no crevis open to let any of the heat out, or any refreshing in to him.



as in more parts a white heart; the inward man and motion of the heart, proportioned to the profession and bearing in the outward man, like a Clock whose wheels within go not as the outward wheels.

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CHAP.

Secondly, sincerity, or truth of heart, may truly be compared to a bridge, in regard of the twofold end, for which it is fitted (especially the spiritual) is worn. First, the bridge is used as an ornament, but on appearance, to cover the joints of the

CHAP. VI.

Of the second kind of Truth, Truth of heart or Sincerity, with the kinds of it; and in particular, of moral uprightnesse, together with its deficiency; and a double Caution about this; the one to the Saints, the other to the morally upright person.

WE come now to the second kind of *Truth*, (commended to the Christian, under the notion of the souldiers girdle) and that is *Truth of heart*. Where it would be known, First, what I mean by truth of heart; Secondly, why compared to a girdle. For the

First, by truth of heart, I understand *sincerity*, so taken in Scripture, *Heb. 10. 22. Let us draw near with a true heart*, that is, with a sincere heart. We have them oft conjoyn'd, the one explaining the other, *Iosh. 24. 14. Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth.* *1 Cor. 5. 8. we read of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* Hypocrisie is a lye with a fair cover over it; an insincere heart is a false heart; the inward frame and motion of the heart, comports not with the profession and behaviour of the outward man; like a Clock, whose wheels within go not as the hand points without.

Secondly, Sincerity, or truth of heart, may fitly be compared to a girdle, in regard of the twofold use and end, for which a girdle (especially the Souldiers Belt) is worn. *First*, the girdle is used as an ornament put on uppermost, to cover the joynts of the

the Armour, which would (if seen) cause some uncomeliness. Here (at the Lyons I mean) those pieces of armour for the defence of the lower parts of the body, are fastened to the upper, now because they cannot be so closely knit and claspt, but there will be some little gaping betwixt piece and piece, therefore they used to put over those parts a broad girdle, that covered all that uncomeliness. Now sincerity doth the same for the Christian, what the girdle doth for the Souldier. The Saints graces are not so close, nor his life so exact, but in the best there are found infirmities and defects, which are as so many gapings and clefts in his armour; but sincerity covers all, that he is neither put to shame for them, nor exposed to danger by them.

Secondly, the girdle was used for strength; by this the loynes were said and united, and the Souldier made stronger to fight or march; as a Garment, the closer it fits, the warmer it is; so the Belt, the closer it is girt, the more strength the loynes feel; hence God threatening to enfeeble and weaken a person or people, saith, *their loynes shall be loosened*, *Esay 45. 1. I will loose the loynes of Kings*, and *Job 12. 21. He weakeneth the strength of the mighty*, Heb. he looseth the girdle of the strong.

Now sincerity may well be compared in this respect to the Souldiers Girdle. It is a grace that doth gird the soul with strength, and makes it mighty to do or suffer. Indeed it is the very strength of every grace; so much hypocritie as is found cleaving to our graces, so much weakness. 'Tis sincere faith that is the strong faith. Sincere love, that is the mighty love. Hypocritie is to grace, as the worm is to the oak, the rust to the Iron, it weakens them, because it corrupts them. The Metaphor thus open'd, affords these two doctrinal conclusions, in handling of which, I shall comprize what I have to say further of this piece of Armour.

1. That sincerity, or truth of heart in our wayes, covers all the Christians uncomeliness.

Doct. 1.

2. That truth of heart, or sincerity, is of excellent use to strengthen the Christian in his whole course.

Doct. 2.

Doct. 1. To begin with the first, Sincerity covers all our uncomeliness. In handling of this point, this is our method.

Doct. 1.

1. First, to enquire which is the truth and sincerity that doth this.
2. Secondly, we shall enquire what uncomelinesses they are that sincerity covers.
3. Thirdly, how sincerity covers them.
4. Fourthly, why sincerity doth this, or some account given for all this.

First, of the first, let us enquire which is that truth and sincerity that covers all uncomelinesses and deficiencies in the Christian. Here we must distinguish of a twofold sincerity; one moral, another Evangelical.

First, There is a moral truth and uprightness, which we may call a Field-flower, because it may be found growing in the wild and waste of Nature. It cannot be deny'd, but one that hath not a dramme of sanctifying saving grace, may shew some kind of uprightness and truth in his actions. God himself comes in as a witness for *Abimelech*, that what he did in taking *Sarah*, was in the uprightness of his heart, *Gen. 20. 6. I know* (saith God) *that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart*, that is, thou didst mean honestly, as to this particular business, and didst not intend any wrong to *Abraham*, whose wife she was, unknown to thee. *Jash*, though a bloody man, yet dealt very uprightly and squarely with *David* concerning the rendition of *Rabbah*, when he had a fair advantage of stealing away the honour from his Prince to himself. Many such instances may be given of men that have been great strangers to a work of grace on their hearts; but this is not the uprightness that we mean in the point laid down. It doth indeed render a person very lovely and amiable before men, to be thus upright and honest in his dealings; but methinks I hear the Lord saying concerning such, as once he did to *Samuel* of *Ediah*, *1 Sam. 16. 7. Look upon their countenance*, as to think these are they which he accepts; No, he hath refused them; *for the Lord seeth not as man seeth*. Gods eye looks deeper than mans. There are two great defects in this uprightness, which God rejects for.

First, it grows not from a good root, a renewed heart. This is a hair on the moral man's pen, which blurs and blurs his copy, when he writes fairest. It is like the leprous of *Naman*, the time, but he was a Leper, took away the honour of his greatness.

Court, and prowess in the field; so here it stains the fairest actions of a meer moral man. *But he is a Christlesse gracelesse person.* The uprightnesse of such does others more good in this world, than themselves in another. They are by this moral honesty profitable to those that have civil commerce with them; but it doth not render themselves acceptable to God. Indeed, had not God left some authority in conscience to awe and keep them (that have no grace) within some bounds of honesty, this world would have been no more habitable for the Saints, than the Forrest of wild beasts is now for man. And such is the uprightnesse of men void of sanctifying grace, they are rather rid by an over-powring light of conscience that scares them, than sweetly led by any inward principle enclining them to take complacency in that which is good. *Abimelech* himself, for whom (as we heard) God so apologized; yet is deterred to know, that his honesty in this matter, came rather from Gods restraint upon him, than any real good in him; *Gen. 20: 7. I also wish-held thee from sinning against me, therefore suffered I that thou not to touch her.*

Secondly, this moral uprightnesse, falls short of the chief end indispensably necessary to make a person upright indeed. This is the glory of God, *1 Cor. 10. 31. Wherever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* The Archer may lose his game by shooting short, as well as shooting wide. The grosse hypocrite shoots wide, the uprightest Moralist shoots short. He may and oft doth take his aim right, as to the particular and immediate end of his action, but ever fails in regard of the ultimate end. Thus, a servant may be faithful to his Master, scorn to wrong him of a farthing, yea, cordially seek his Masters profit, and yet God not looked at, nor thought of in all this, and so all worth nothing because God is left out of the story; who is principally to be regarded, *Ephes. 6. 7. Servants are commanded to do their service as to God, not to man; that is, not only, not obsequiously to man.* 'Tis true, the Master is to be looked at in the servants duty, but in his way, onely as it leads to the glory of God; he must stop when he hath desired to please his earthly Master, & slow his at his journey's end, but pass on (as the eye doth through the air, and Clouds to the Sun where it is terminated) so he to God, as the chief end, why he is dutiful and faithful to man.

man. Now no principle can lead the soul so high, as to aim at God, but that which comes from God. See both these excellently coucht together, *Phil. 1. 10, 11. That ye may be sincere, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.* Where you may observe, *First*, that the sincerity of the right stamp, is that which brings forth fruits of righteousness to the praise of God, that is, where the glory of God is the end of all our actions. *Secondly*, that such fruit cannot be born, but by Christ; the soul must be planted into Christ, before it can be thus sincere, to bear fruits of righteousness to the praise of God. Hence these fruits of righteousness are said to be by *Jesus Christ*. What men do by themselves, they do for themselves: They eat their own fruit, devour the praise of what they do; the Christian onely that doth all by Christ, doth all for Christ; he hath his sap from Christ (into whom he is grafted) that makes him fruitful, and therefore he reserves all the fruit he bears for him. Thus we see how this moral uprightness is it self fundamentally defective, and therefore cannot be that girdle which hides and covers our other defects: yet before I passe on to the other, I would leave a twofold Caution for improvement of what hath been said concerning this uprightness; The one is to the sincere Christian; the other is to such as have no more thin a moral uprightness.

Caution 1.

First, to the sincere Christian. May there be found a kind of uprightness among men that are carnal and destitute of Gods sanctifying grace? Or then look you to it, in whose hearts dwells the Spirit of Grace, that you be not put to shame by those that are gracelesse, which you must needs be when you are raken ratdy in those things, that they cannot be charged for. Many among them there are that scorn to lye? Shall a Saint be taken in an untruth? Their moral principles bind them over to the peace, and will not suffer them to wrong their neighbour; and can cheating, over-reaching oppression follow a Saints hand? except your righteousness exceeds their best, you are not Christians; and can you let them exceed you in those things, which, when they are done, leave them short of Christ and heaven? 'Tis time for the Scholar to throw off his Gown, and disclaim the name of an *Academick*, when every School-boy is able to dunce

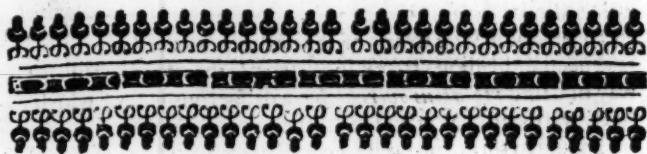
dunce and pose him. And for him also to lay aside his profession, and let the world know what he is, (yea, what he never was) that can let a meer civil man, with his weak bow, onely backed with moral principles, out-shoot him that pretends to Christ and his grace. I confesse it sometimes so falls out, that a Saint under a temptation, may be out-stripe by one that is carnal in a particular case: As a *Lackey* that is an excellent foot-man, may (from some prick, or present lameness in his foot) be left behind, by one, that at another time should not be able to come near him; we have too many sorrowful examples of mortal mens out-stripping even a Saint at a time, when under a temptation; a notable passage we meet with concerning *Abimelech* his speech to *Sarah*, (after her dissembling and equivocating speech, that *Abraham* was her brother,) *Gen. 26. 16.* And unto *Sarah* he said (that is, *Abimelech* said to her,) *Behold, I have given thy Brother a thousand pieces of silver, behold he is for thee a covering of the eyes unto all that are with thee, and with all other.* Now mark the words which follow, *Thus she was reprov'd.* How? where lies the reproof? Here are none but good words, and money to boot also. He promiseth protection to her and *Abraham*; none should wrong him in wronging her; and tells her what he had freely given *Abraham*. Well, for all this we shall find a sharp reproof, though lapt up in these sweet words, and silvered over with his thousand pieces. First, she was reprov'd by the uprightness of *Abimelech* in that business, wherein she had sinfully dissembled. That he who was a stranger to the true God and his Worship, should be so square and honest, as to deliver her up untoucht, when once he knew her to be another mans Wife, and not only so, but instead of falling into a passion of anger, and taking up thoughts of revenging against them, for putting this cheat upon him (which having them under his power, had not been strange for a Prince to have done) for him to forget all this, and rather shew such kindness and high bounty to them, this must needs send a sharp reproof home to *Sarahs* heart; especially considering, that he a Heathen did all this; and she (one call'd to the knowledge of God, in Covenant with God, and the Wife of a Prophet) was so poor-spirited, as for fear of a danger, which only her husband (and that without any great ground) surmised, to commit two sins

sins at one clap, dissemble, and also hazard the loss of her chastity; (the least of which was worse, than the thing they were so afraid of) these things, I say, laid together, amounted to such a reproof, as no doubt made her and *Abraham* too, heartily ashamed before God and man. *Again*, *Abimelech* calling *Abraham* her Brother (not her Husband) did give her a smart rebuke, putting her in mind, how with that word he had been deceived by them. Thus godly *Sarah* was reproved by a profane King. O Christians, take heed of putting words into the mouths of wicked men to reprove you withal; they cannot reprove you, but they reproach God: Christ is put to shame with you and by you; for the good name sake of Christ, which cannot but be dearer to you (if Saints) than your lives, look to your walking, and especially your civil converse with the men of this world; They know not what you do in your Closet, care not what you are in the Congregation; they judge you by what you are, when they have to do with you. As they find you in your Shop, Bargains, Promises, and such like, so they think of you and your profession. Labour therefore for this uprightness to man; by this you may win some, and judge others. Better vex the wicked world with strict walking, as *Lot* did the *Sodomites*, than set them on work to mock, and reproach thee and thy profession by any scandal, as *David* did by his sad fall. They that will not follow the light of thy holiness, will soon spy the chink in the Candle, and point at it.

Caution 2.

The second word of Caution, is to those that are morally upright, and no more. Take heed this uprightness proves not a snare to thee, and keeps thee from getting Evangelical uprightness. I am sure it was so to the young man in the Gospel. In all likelihood he might have been better, had he not been so good. His honesty and moral uprightness was his undoing; not rather his conceit of them, to castle himself in them. Better he had been a Publican, driven to Christ in the sense of his sin, than a Pharisee, kept from him with an opinion of his integrity. These, these are the weeds, with which many (thinking to save themselves by,) keep themselves under water to their perdition; *Ebrie* it were hope of a fool, *Salomon* tells us, than of one wife in *Levi* conceit; and of the greatest sinner, than of one conceited of his righteousness. If once the disease take the brain, the cure must needs be

be the more difficult; No offering Christ to one in this frenzy. Art thou one kept from these unrighteous wayes wherein others walk? May be thou art honest and upright in thy course, and scornest to be found false in any of thy dealings. Blessè God for it, but take heed of blessing thy self in it; ther's the danger, this is one way of being *righteous overmuch*; a dangerous pit, of which *Solomon* warns all that travel in heaven road, *Eccles. 7. 16*. There is undoing in this over-doing, as well as in any under-doing. For so it follows in the same verse, *Why shouldest thou destroy thy self?* Thou art not (proud man) so fair for heaven as thou flatterest thy self. A man upon the top of one hill, may seem very nigh to the top of another, and yet can never come there, except he comes down from that where he is. The mount of thy civil righteousness and moral uprightness (on which thou standest so confidently) seems perhaps level in thy proud eye to Gods holy hill in heaven, yea, so nigh, that thou thinkest to step over from one to the other with ease. But let me tell thee, it is too great a stride for thee to take; thy safer way and nearer, were to come down from thy mountain of self-confidence, (where Satan hath set thee on a design to break thy neck) and to go the ordinary road, in which all that ever got heaven went; and that is by labouring to get an interest in Christ and his righteousness, which is provided on purpose for the creature to wrap up his naked soul in, and to place his faith on; and thus thy uprightness (which before was but of the same form with the Heathens moral honesty) may commence, or rather be baptized Christian, and become Evangelical grace: But let me tell thee this before I dismiss thee, that thou canst not lay hold of Christs righteousness, till thou hast let fall the lye (thy own righteousness) which hitherto thou hast held so fast in thy right hand. When Christ called the *blind man* to him, *Mark 10. 50*. it's said, *he casting away his garment, rose and came to Jesus*; do thou so, and then come and welcome.



CHAP. VII.

Of Evangelical or godly Sincerity, what it is, and what uncomelineffes this Girdle covers, as also how it covers them.

WE proceed to the second kind of *Truth*, or uprightnesse, which I called an Evangelical uprightnesse. This is a plant found growing only in Christs Garden, or the enclosure of a gracious soul. It is, by way of distinction from that I called moral, known by the name of a *godly sincerity*, or the sincerity of God, 2 Cor. 1. 12. *Our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that is simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.* Now in two respects this Evangelical sincerity may be called godly sincerity. First, because it is of God. Secondly, because it aims at God, and ends in God.

SECT. I.

1.

First, It is of God. It is his creature, begot in the heart by his Spirit alone. Paul in the place forementioned, 2 Cor. 1. 12. doth excellently derive its pedigree for us. What he calls walking in godly sincerity in the first part of the verse, he calls, having our conversation by the grace of God in the latter part; yea, opposeth it to walking with fleshly wisdom in the world, (the great wheel in the moral mans clock) and what doth all this amount

amount to? but to shew that this sincerity is a babe of grace, and calls none on earth father. But this is not all, this godly sincerity is not only of divine extraction (for so are common gifts that are supernatural; the hypocrites boon as well as the Saints) but it is part of the new creature, which his sanctifying Spirit forms and works in the elect, and none besides. It is a Covenant-grace. *Ezek. 11. 19. I will give them one heart, and I will put a new Spirit within you.* That one heart is this godly sincere heart opposed to the double heart, or a heart and a heart, by which the hypocrite is so often descryed in the Word.

Secondly, *It aims at God, and ends in God.* The highest project and most ultimate end that a soul, thus sincere, is big with, is, how it may please God. The disappointment such a godly sincere person meets with from any other, troubles him no more, than it would a Merchant, who speeds in the main end of his voyage to the *Indies*, and returns richly laden with the prize of gold and silver he went for, but only loseth his garter or shoe-string in the voyage. As the Masters eye directs the servants hand, (if he can do his business to his Masters mind, he hath his wish, though strangers, who come into the shop, like it not.) Thus godly sincerity acquiesceth in the Lords judgement of him. Such a one shoots not at small nor great, studies not to accommodate himself to any, to hit the humour of rich or poor, but singles out God in his thoughts from all other, as the chief object of his love, fear, faith, joy, &c. he directs all his endeavours like a wise Archer at this white, and when he can most approve himself to God, he counts he shoots best. Hear holy *Paul* speaking, not only his own private thoughts, but the common sense of all sincere believers, *1 Cor. 5. 9. We labour, whether present or absent, that we may be accepted of him.* The worlds true man, is he that will not wrong man: Though many go thus far, who can make bold with God for all their demure carriage to man. Some that would not steal the worth of a penny from their neighbour, yet play the notorious thieves with God in greater matters, than all the money their neighbour hath is worth. They can steal that time from God, (to gratifie their own occasions) which he hath enclosed for himself, and layes peculiar claim to (the Sabbath-day I mean) by

such a title as will upon tryal be found stronger (I trow) than we can shew for the rest of the week to be ours. Others will not lie to man possibly in their dealing with him, (and it were better living in the world, if there were more of this truth among us) but these very men (many of them, yea all, that are not more than morally upright) make nothing of lying to God, which they do in every prayer they make, promising to do what they never bestow a serious thought how they may perform: they say they will sanctifie Gods Name, and yet throw dirt in the face of every attribute in it; they pray that the Will of God may be done, and yet while they know their sanctification is his will, they content themselves with their unholy hearts and natures, and think it enough to beautifie the front of their lives, that part which faceth man, and stands to the street (as I may so say) with a few flourishes of civility and justnes in their worldly dealings, though their inward man lies all in woeful ruines at the same time. But he is Gods true man, that desires to give unto God the things that are Gods, as well as unto man the things that are mans; yea, who is first true to God, and then to man for his sake. Good *Joseph* when his breathren feared as strangers to him (for yet they knew no other) they should receive some hard measure at his hands; mark, what course he takes to free their troubled thoughts from all suspicion of any unrighteous dealing from him. *Do this* (saith he) *and live, for I fear God*, Gen. 42. 18. As if he had said, expect nothing from me, but what is square and upright, for I fear God; you possibly think because I am a great man, and you poor strangers, (where you have no friends to intercede for you) that my might should bear down your right, but you may save your selves the trouble of such jealous thoughts concerning me; for I see one infinitely more above me, than I seem to be above you, and him I fear; which I could not do, if I should be false to you. The word, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. for sincerity is emphatical, *ἐν ἀκρίβει*, a Metaphor from things tryed by the light of the Sun, as when you are buying cloath, (or such like ware) you will carry it out of the dark shop, and hold it up to the light, by which the least hole in it is discovered; or as the *Eagle* (say some) holds up her young against the Sun, and judgeth them her own, if able to look up wisely against it, or spurious if not able. Truly, that is the godly sincere soul, which looks up to heaven, and desires to be determined in his thoughts,

thoughts, judgement, affections and practises, as they can stand before the light, which shines from thence through the Word, the great luminary into which God hath gather'd all light for guiding souls, as the Sun in the firmament is for directing our bodies in their walking to and fro in the world. If these suit with the Word, and can look on it, without being put to shame by it, then on the sincere soul goes in his enterprize with courage, nothing shall stop him: But if any of these be found to shun the light of the Word, (as *Adam* would (if he could) the seeing of God) not being able to stand to its tryal, then he is at his journeys end, and can be drawn forth by no arguments from the flesh; for it goes not on the fleshes errand, but on Gods; and he that sends him, shall only stay him. Things are true or right, as they agree with their first principles. When the counterpane agrees with the original writing, then 'tis true; when a measure agrees with the Legal Standard or Town Bushel, then 'tis true; Now the will of God is standard to all our wills, and he is the sincere man, that labours to take the rule and measure of all his affections and actions from thar. Hence *David* is called a man after Gods own heart, which is but a *Periphrasis* of his sincerity, and is as much as if the Spirit of God had said, he was an upright man, he carries on his heart the sculpture and image of Gods heart, as it is engraved on the seal of the Word. But enough for the present; this may serve to shew what is Evangelical uprightness. Three things would be desired further before we fall on the Application.

First, to shew what uncomlineffes they are that sincerity covers.

Secondly, how sincerity covers these.

Thirdly, why this Evangelical sincerity doth cover these. We shall give some account to all.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Quest. I. First, of the first, What uncomeliness doth sinceritie cover?

Ans. I answer, all, especially sinful. There are several external temporal priviledges, in which, if any fall short (such excellency does this vain world put in them, more than their intrinsical worth calls for) they are exposed to some dishonour (if not contempt) in the thoughts of others. Now where sincere grace is, it affords a fair cover to them all; yea, puts more abundant honour on the person in the sight of God, Angels, (and men also if wise) than the other can occasion contempt.

I

First, Beauty, this is the great Idol, which the whole world wanders after, as they after the *Beast*, *Rev. 13.* which if God denies (and confines the souls of some, to a more uncomely house (body I mean) than others) this their mean bodily presence prejudiceth them in the esteem of others; now grace, if it be but graced with sincerity, shines through the cloud that nature hath darkened the countenance withal, *Eccles. 8. 1. Wisdom, makes the face to shine*; who, that hath the use of his reason, would not prize, and choose the vessel in the cellar full of generous wine, before a gilt tun that hangs up empty at the door for a signe? If sincere grace fills not the heart within, the beauty with which nature hath gilt the face without, makes the person but little worth. A beautiful person without true grace, is but a fair stinking weed; you know the best of such a one, if you look on him furthest off; whereas a sincere heart without this outward beauty to commend it, is like some sweet flower (not painted with such fine colours on the leaves) better in the hand than eye, to smell on, than look on; the nearer you come to the sincere soul, the better you find him. Outward uncomeliness to true grace, is but as some old mean buildings, you sometimes see stand before a goodly stately house, which hide its glory only from the traveller that passeth by at some distance; but he that comes in, sees its beauty, and admires it.

Again, a mean parentage, and inglorious descent is much despised in the world. Well, how base soever the stock and ignoble the birth be, when grace unfeigned comes, it brings arms with

with it, it clarifies the blood, and makes the house illustrious. *Since thou wast precious in my eye, thou hast been honourable, Esay 4. 4.* Sincerity sets a mark of honour; if you see this star shining, though over a mean Cottage, it tells thee a great Prince dwells there, an heir of heaven; sincerity brings the creature into alliance with a high family, no less than of the high God, by which new alliance, his own inglorious name is blotted out, and a new name given him; He bears the name of God, to whom he is joyn'd by a faith unfeigned, and who dares say that the God of heavens child, or Christs bride, are of an ignoble birth;

Again, a low purse, (as well as a low parentage) exposeth to contempt, yea, more: some by their purse redeem themselves in time (as they think) from the scorn of their mean stock. The little spring from whence the water came, by that time it hath run some miles, and swell'd into a broad River is out of sight, and not enquired much after: But poverty, that it self sounds reproach in the ears of this proud world. Well, though a man were poor, even to a proverb; yet if a vein of true godliness, sincere grace be but to be found running in his heart: Here is a rich Mine, that will lift him up above all the worlds contempt; such a one may possibly say, he hath no money in his house; but he cannot say, that he hath no treasure, that he is not rich, and speak true; he sure is rich, that hath a key to Gods treasury. The sincere soul is rich in God, what God hath, is his, *all is yours, you are Christs.*

Again, in a word, to name no more parts and endowments of the mind, these are applauded above all the former by some; and indeed they carry in them an excellency, that stands more level to his noblest faculty (Reason) than the other, which are so far beneath its spiritual nature, that as *Gideons* souldiers (some of them) could not drink the water till they bowed down on their knees, so neither could man take any relish in these, did he not first debase himself far beneath the lofty stature of his reasonable soul; but knowledge, parts, and abilities of the mind, these seem to lift up mans head, and make him that he loseth none of his height; and therefore none so contemptible by the wise world, as those that are of weak parts, and mean intellectual abilities.

abilities. Well, now let us see what cover sincerity hath for this nakednesse of the mind, which seems the most shameful of all the rest. Where art thou Christian, that I may tell thee (who sits lamenting, and bemoaning thy weak parts, and shallow understanding) what a happy man thou art, with thy honest sincere heart, beyond all compare with these, whose sparkling parts do so dazle thy eyes, that thou canst not see thy own priviledge above them? Their pearl is but in the head, and they may be toads for all that; but thine is in the heart, and 'tis the pearl of grace, that is the pearl of greatest price. Thy sincere heart sets thee higher in Gods heart, than thy weak parts do lay thee low in their deceived opinion; and thou without the abilities of mind that they have, shalt find the way to heaven; But they for all their strong parts, shall be tumbled down to hell, because they have not thy sincerity. Thy mean gifts do not make thee incapable of heavens glory; but their un sanctified gifts and endowments are sure to make them capable of more of hells shame and misery. In a word, though here thy head be weak, and parts low; yet for thy comfort know, Thou shalt have a better head given thee to thy sincere heart, when thou comest to heaven; but their knowing heads shall not meet with better hearts in hell, but be yoked eternally to their own wicked ones in torment, but enough of this. I come to the second kind of uncomeliness which sincerity covers, and that is sinful.

2.

Secondly, now this sinful uncomeliness must needs be the worst, because it lights on the most beautiful part, the soul; if dirt thrown on the face be more uncomely than on another member (because 'tis the fairest) then no uncomeliness like that, which crocks and blacks the soul and spirit, because this is intended by God, to be the prime seat of mans beauty. Now that which most stains and deforms the soul, must be that which most opposeth its chief perfection, which in its primitive creation was, and can still be no other, than the beauty of holiness drawn on it, by the holy Spirits curious pencil; and what can that be but the foul monster which is called sin? this hath marr'd mans sweet countenance, that he is no more like the beauty of God created, than dead *Sarabs* face was like that beauty, which was a bait for the greatest Princes, and made her husband go in fear of his life, wherever he came; nay, than the foul Fiend, now a cursed Devil in Hell.

Hell, is like to the holy Angel he was in heaven. This wound which is given by sin to mans nature, Christ hath undertaken to cure by his grace in his Elect: The cure is begun here, but not so perfected, that no scar and blemish remains; and this is the great uncomeliness which sincerity lays its finger on, and covers.

SECT. III.

Quest. But here the question may be, how sincerity covers the Saints sinful uncomelinesses?

Quest.

Ans. I shall answer to this, *First, negatively*, and shew how it doth not; *Secondly, affirmatively*, how it doth.

Ans.

First, Negatively, how sincerity doth not cover them; and that in several particulars. *First*, sincerity doth not so cover the Saints failings, as to take away their sinful nature; wandering thoughts are sins in a Saint, as well as in another; A weed will be a weed where-ever it grows, though in a garden among choicest flowers; They mistake then, who, because the Saints sins are covered, deny them to be sins. *Secondly*, it doth not cover them so, as to give us the least ground to think, that God doth allow the Christian to commit the least sin more than others; indeed 'tis inconsistent with Gods holiness to give, and with a Saints sincerity to pretend such a dispensation to be given them. A father may, out of his indulgence and love to his child, passe by a failing in his waiting on him; as if he spills the wine, or breaks the glasse he is bringing to him; but sure he will not allow him to throw it down carelessly or willingly. Though a man may be easily entreated to forgive his friend that wounded him unawares, when he meant him no hurt; yet he will not beforehand give him leave to do it. *Thirdly*, it doth not so cover them, as that God should not see them, which is not only derogatory to his omniscience, but to his mercy also; for he cannot pardon, what he doth not first see to be sin; God doth not only see the sins of his children, but their failings are more distasteful to him than others; because the persons in which they are found, are so dear, and stand so near unto him. A dung-hill in a

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Princes chamber would be more offensive to him, than one far off from his Court. The Christians bosome is Gods Court, Throne, Temple, there he hath taken up his rest for ever. Sin there must needs be very unsavoury to his nostrils. *Fourthly*, it doth not so cover them, as that the Saints need not confesse them, be humbled under them, or sue out a pardon for them; a penny is as due debt as a pound, and therefore to be acknowledged; Indeed that which is a sin of infirmity in the committing, becomes a sin of presumption by hiding of it, and hardning in it. Job held fast his integrity throughout his sad conflict; yet those failings which 'scaped him in the paroxysme of his afflictions brought him upon his knees; *I abhor my self* (saith he) *and repent in dust and ashes*, Job 42. 6. *Fifthly*, and lastly, it doth not so cover them, as if our sincerity did the least merit, and deserve, that God should for it cover our other failings and infirmities; were there such a thing as obedience absolutely compleat, it could not merit pardon for past sins; much less can an imperfect obedience (as sincerity is in a strickt sense) deserve it for present failings. Obedience legally perfect, is no more than (as creatures) we owe to the Law of God; and how could that pay the debt of sinne, which was it self due debt, before any sin was committed? much less can Evangelical obedience (which is sincerity) do it, that falls short by far of that obedience we do owe. If he that owes twenty pounds, merits nothing when he pays the whole sum, then surely he doth not, that of the twenty pounds he owes, pays but twenty pence. Indeed Creditors may take what they please, and if they will say half satisfies them, it is discharge enough to the debtor. But where did ever God say he would thus compound with his creature? God stands as strictly upon it in the Gospel-Covenant to have the whole debt paid, as he did in the first of works. There was required a full righteousness in keeping, or a full curse for breaking of the Law; so there is in the Evangelical; only here the wards of the lock are changed. God required this at the creatures hand, in the first Covenant to be personally performed, or endured. But in the Gospel-Covenant he is content to take both at the hands of Christ our surety, and impute these to the sincere soul that unfeignedly believes on him, and gives up himself to him.

SECT. IV.

SSecondly, To shew positively how sincerity covers the Saints failings.

First, sincerity is that property to which pardoning mercy is annexed. True indeed, 'tis Christ that covers all our sins and failings, but it is only the sincere soul, over which he will cast his skirt. *Psalm 32. 2. Blessed is he whose sin is covered; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.* None will doubt this; but which is the man? the next words tell us his name; and in whose spirit there is no guile. Christ's righteousness is the garment that covers the nakedness, and shame of our unrighteousness; faith the grace that puts this garment on; but what faith? none but the faith unfeigned, as *Paul* calls it, *2 Tim. 1. Here's water, saith the Eunuch, What doth hinder me to be baptized? Acts 8. 36.* now mark *Philips* answer, *ver. 37. If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest*; as if he had said, nothing but an hypocritical heart can hinder thee. 'Tis the false heart only that finds the door of mercy shut. He that promiseth to cover the sincere souls failings, threatens to uncover the hypocrites impiety, *Prov. 10. 9. He that perverteth his way, shall be known, that is, to his shame.*

Secondly, where sincerity is, God approves of that soul, as a holy righteous person, notwithstanding that mixture of sin which is found in him. As God doth not like the Saints sin for his sincerity, so he doth not un-saint him for that. God will set his hand to *Lots* testimonial, that he is a righteous man, though many sins are recorded in the Scripture, which he fell into (and foul ones too) yet *Job* perfect, because the frame of his heart was sincere, the tenure of his life holy, and he was rather surprized by them as temptations, than they entertained by him upon choice. Though sincerity doth not blind Gods eye, that he should not see the Saints sin, yet it makes him see it with a pitiful eye, and not a wrathful! As a husband knowing his wife faithful to him in the main, pities her in other weaknesses, and for all them accounts her a good wife. In all this (saith God) *Job* sinned not; and at the very close of his combat, God brings him out of the field with this honourable re-

testimony to his friends, that had taken so much pains to bring his godlinesse in question; that his servant *Job* had spoke right of him. Truly God said more of *Job*, than he durst of himself. He freely confesseth his unadvised froward speeches, and cries out, *I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.* God saw *Jobs* sins attended with sincerity, and therefore judged him perfect and righteous: *Job* saw his sincerity dash't with many sad failings, and this made him in the close of all, rather confesse his sinnes with shame, than glory in his grace. Gods mercy is larger to his children, than their charity is many times to themselves and their brethren. *First, to themselves*; do you think the *Prodigal* (the emblem of a convert) durst have askt the robe, or desired his father to be at such cost for his entertainment, as his father freely bestowed on him? no sure, a room in the Kitchen we see was as high as he durst ask, to be among the meanest servants in the house; poor soul! he could not conceive he should have such a meeting with his father at first sight. A robe! he might rather look for a rope, at least a rod. A feast at his fathers table! O, unlookt for, welcome! I doubt not but if any had met him on his way, and told him that his father was resolv'd as soon as he came home, not to let him see his face, but presently pack him to *Bride-well*, there to be whipt, and fed with bread and water for many moneths, and then perhaps he would at last look on him, and take him home, but in his starving condition this would have been good newes to him; but as God hath strange punishments for the wicked, so he hath strange expressions of love and mercy for sincere souls. He loves to out-do their highest expectations; kisse, robe, feast, all in one day, and that the first day of his return, when the memory of his outrageous wickednesses were fresh, and the stinking scent of his swill and swine from which he was but newly come, hardly gone! What a great favourite is sincerity with the God of heaven! *Again*, Gods mercy is larger to his children, than their charity is towards one another. Those whom we are ready to un-saint for their failings that appear in their lives, God owns for his perfect ones, because of their sincerity. We find *Asa*s failings exprest, and his perfection voucht by God together, as I may say in a breath, 2 *Chron.* 15. 17. It was well God clea'd that good man; for had but the naked sto-

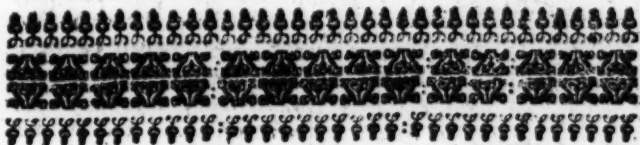
ry of his life, (as it stands in the Scripture) been recorded, without any expresse testimony of Gods approving him, his godlinesse would have hazarded a coming under dispute in the opinion of good men, yea many more with him (concerning whom we are now put out of doubt, because we find them canonized for Saints by God himself) would have been cast, if a Jury of men, and those holy men too, had gone upon them. *Elijah* himself, because he saw none have such zeal for God, and his Worship, as to wear their colours openly in a free profession, and hang out a flag of defiance against the idolatry of the times, by a stout opposing it, as he did, (which might be their sin) makes a sad moan to God, as if the apostasie had been so general, that the whole species of the godly had been preserv'd in his single person. But God brings the holy man better news, *1 Kings 19. 18. I have left seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed down to Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.* As if God had said, comfort thyself *Elijah*; though my number be not great, yet neither is there such a dearth of Saints as thou fearest in this ungodly age; it is true, their faith is weak, they dare not juggle with the sins of the age, as thou doest, for which thou shalt not lose thy reward; yet those night-disciples, that for fear carry their light in a dark lantern (having some sincerity which keeps them from polluting themselves with these idolatries) must not, shall not be disown'd by me. Yea, God, who bids us be most tender of his Lambs, is much more tender of them himself. Observable is that place, *1 Joh. 2. 12, 13, 14.* There are three ranks of Saints, *Fathers, Young men, little Children*, and the Spirit of God chiefly shews his tender care of them, as by mentioning them first, *ver. 12.* so by leaving the sweet promise of pardoning mercy in their lap and bosome, rather than either of the other; *Little children, I write unto you, for your sins are forgiven you for my Name sake.* But are not the Fathers sins, and young mens also forgiven? yes, who doubts it? But he doth not so particularly apply it to them, as to these, because these from the sense of their own failings (out of which the other were more grown) were more prone to dispute against this promise in their own bosomes: yea, he doth not only in plain terms tell them, their sins are forgiven, but meets with the secret objection, which comes from their trembling

trembling hearts in opposition to this good news, taken from their own vilenesse and unworthinesse, and stops its mouth with this, *forgiven for my Names sake*, a greater name, than the name of their biggest sin, which discourageth them from believing.

3.

Thirdly, sincerity keeps up the souls credit at the Throne of grace, so that no sinful infirmity can hinder its welcome with God. 'Tis the *regarding of iniquity in the heart*, (not the having of it) stops Gods ear from hearing our prayer. It is a temptation, not a few have found some work to get over; whether such as they, who see so many sinful failings in themselves, may take the boldnesse to pray, or without presuming to expect audience when they have prayed; and sometimes prevails so far, that because they cannot pray as they would, therefore they forbear what they should; much like some poor people, that keep from the Congregation, because they have not such cloaths to come in as they desire. To meet with such as are turning away from duty upon this fear, the promises (which are our only ground for prayer, and chief plea in prayer) are accommodated, and fitted to the lowest degree of grace; so that as a picture well drawn, faceth all in the room alike that look on it; so the promises of the Gospel-Covenant smile upon all that sincerely look to God in Christ. It is not said, *If you have faith like a Cedar*, but *if you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed*, *ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove*, Mat. 17. 20. neither is justifying faith beneath miraculous faith in its own sphere of activity; the least faith on Christ, if sincere, as truly removes the mountainous guilt of sin from the soul, as the strongest; hence all the Saints are said to have *like precious faith*, 2 Pet. 1. 1. *Sarabs* faith (which in *Genesis* we can hardly see (as the story presents her) wherein it appeared) obtains an honourable mention, Heb. 11. where God owns her for a believer, as well as *Abraham* with his stronger faith. What love is it the promise entails the favours of God upon? not *grace be with them that love our Lord Jesus* with a *Seraphims* love, but with a *sincere* love, Eph. 6. last. Not blessed they who are holy to such a measure; this would have fitted but some Saints, the greatest part would have gone away and said, *There's nothing for me, I am not so holy*; but that no Saint might lose his portion, *'Tis blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness*; and this takes in all the children of God,
even

even to the least babe, that is newly born this day to Christ. The new Convert hungers after holiness, and that sincerely. And wherefore all this care so to lay the promises? but to shew that when we go to make use of any promise at the Throne of grace, we should not question our welcome for any of our infirmities, so this stamp of sincerity be upon our hearts. Indeed if sincerity did not thus much for the Saint, there could not be a prayer accepted of God at the hands of any Saint that ever was, or shall be on earth to the end of the world, because there never was, nor shall be such a Saint dwelling in flesh here below, in whom eminent failings may not be found. The Apostle would have us know that *Elijah*, who did as great wonders in heaven and earth too by prayer, as who greatest? yet this man God could soon have pickt a hole in his coat. Indeed lest we attribute the prevalency of his prayers to the dignity of his person, and some eminency which he had by himself in grace above others, the Spirit of God tells us, he was of the same make with his poor brethren. *Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed, &c. James 5.* a weak hand with a sincere heart, is able to turn the key in prayer.



CHAP. VIII.

An account why sincerity covers the Saints uncomlineffes.

NOW follows the fourth *Quere*, Whence is it that sincerity thus covers our failings?

Quest.

SECT.

SECT. I.

Reas. 1.

First, It flowes from the grace of the Gospel-Covenant, that relaxeth the rigour of the Law, which call'd for complear obedience; by resolving all that into this of sincerity and truth of heart. Thus God when entring into Covenant with *Abraham*, expresseth himself, *I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect or sincere*, Gen. 17. 1. As if God had said to him, *Abraham*, see here what I expect at thy hands, and what thou mayest expect at mine. I look that thou shouldst set me before thee, whom in thy whole course and walking thou wilt sincerely endeavour to please and approve thy self to, and at my hands thou mayest promise thy self what an *Almighty God can do*, both in protecting thee in thy obedience, and pardoning of thee, where thou fallest short of perfect obedience; walk but in the truth of thy heart before me, and in Christ I will accept thee, and thy sincere endeavour, as kindly as I would have done *Adam*, if he had kept his place in innocency, and never sinn'd; indeed a sincere heart by vertue of this Covenant might (I mean the Covenant would bear him out, and defend him in it, relying on Christ) converse with God, and walk before him with as much freedome, and more familiarity (by reason of a nearer relation it hath) than ever *Adam* did, when God and he was best friends. *If our heart condemn us not*, then saith the Apostle, *we have confidence towards God*, 1 John 3. 21. *ingenitior exqule*, we have a boldness of face. And 'tis not the presence of sin in us, (as the Covenant now stands) that conscience can or (if rightly informed concerning the tenure of it) will condemn us for; *Pauls* conscience clea'd him, yea, afforded matter of rejoycing, and holy glorying at the same time, that he found sinne stirring in him. No, conscience is set by God to judge for him in the private Court of our own bosomes, and it is bound up by a Law, what sentence to give for, or against, and that in the same, by which Christ himself will acquit or condemn the world at last day. Now when we go upon the trial for our lives, before Christs bar, the great inquest will be, whether we have been sincere or no? and as Christ will not then condemn

denn the sincere soul, though a thousand sins could be objected against it; so neither can our hearts condemn us.

Quest. But here it may be askt, how comes God so favourable in the Covenant of the Gospel, to accept an obedience so imperfect at his Saints hands, who was so strict with *Adam* in the first, that the least failing, though but once 'icaping him was to be accounted unpardonable?

Ans. The resolution of this Question take in these two particulars?

First, in the Covenant God made with man-kind in *Adam*, there was no *sponsor*, or surety to stand bound to God for mans performance of his part in the Covenant, (which was perfect obedience) and therefore God could do no other but stand strictly with him; because he had none else, from whom he might recover his glory, and thereby pay himself for the wrong mans fault might do him: But in the Gospel-Covenant there is a surety, Christ the righteous, who stands responsible to God for all the defaults and failings which occur in the Christians course. The Lord Jesus doth not only take upon him to discharge the vast sums of those sins, which he finds them charged with before conversion; but for all those dribbling debts, which afterward, through their infirmity, they contract. *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins*, 1 Joh. 2. 2. so that God may without any impeachment to his justice, crosse his Saints debts, which he is paid for by their surety; 'tis mercy indeed to the Saints, but justice to Christ, that he should: O happy conjunction, where mercy and justice thus conspire, and kiss each other!

Secondly, God did, and well might require full and perfect obedience of man in the first Covenant, because he was in a perfect state, of full power and ability to perform it, so that God lookt to reap no more than he had planted. But in the Gospel-Covenant God doth not at first infuse into the believer full grace, but true grace; and accordingly he expects not full obedience, but sincere. He considers our frame, and every believer is (if I may so say) rated in Gods books as the stock of grace is, which God gives to set up withal at first.

Quest.

Ans.

1.

2.

3.

SECT. II.

Reas. 2.

The second reason may be taken from the great love he bears, and liking he takes to this disposition of heart, upon which follows this act of grace, to cover their failings where he spies it; 'tis the nature of love to cover infirmities, even to a multitude. *Ester* transgresseth the Law, by coming into *Ahasuerus's* presence, before she was sent for; but love soon erected a pardon-office in the Kings breast, to forgive her that fault; and truly she did not find so much favour in the eys of that great Monarch, as the sincere soule doth in the eys of the great God. He did not more delight in *Esters* beauty, than God doth in this, *Prov. 11. 20.* *Such as are upright in their way, are his delight;* his soul closeth with that man, as one that suits with the disposition of his own holy nature, one whose heart is right with his heart; and so with infinite content to see a ray of his own excellency sparkle in his creature, he delights in him, and takes him by the hand, to lift him up into the bosome of his love, a better *Christ* I trow, than that which *Jehu* prefer'd *Jehonadab* to, for his faithfulness to him: You seldom find any spoken of as upright in the *Scripture*, that are passed over with a plain, naked inscription of their uprightness; but some circumstance there is, which, like the costly work, and curious engraving about some Tombs, tell the passenger, they are no ordinary men that lie there. God speaking of *Jobs* uprightness, represents him as a non-such in his age. *None like him in the earth, a perfect man, and upright;* mention was before made of his vast estate, and in that also he was a non-such; but when God comes to glory over Satan, by telling what a servant he had to wait on him, he doth not count this worth the telling the Devil of; Nor, hast thou considered my servant *Job*, that there is none so rich? but none so upright. When God speaks to *Calebs* uprightness, see to what a height he exalts him, *Numb. 14. 24.* *But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land, &c.* As if God had said, here's a man I do not count my self disparaged to own him for my servant, and special favourite; he is

Job 1. 8.

is one that carries more worth in him, than the whole multitude of murmuring *Israelites* besides: he had *another spirit*, that is for excellency, add noblenesse, far above the rest; and wherein did this appear? the next words resolve us, *He hath followed me fully*. Now that which gain'd him this great honour from Gods own mouth, we shall find to be his sincerity, and especially in that business when sent to search the Land of *Canaan*, *Joshuah* 14. 7. and verse 9. compared, he had great temptations to tell another tale. The *Israelites* were so sick of their enterprize, that he should be the welcomest messenger that brought the worst news, from which they might have some colour for their murmuring against *Moses*, who had brought them into such straits; and of twelve that were sent, there were ten that suited their answer to this discontented humour of the people; so that by making a contrary report to theirs, he did not only come under the suspicion of a liar, but hazard his life among an enraged people; yet such was the courage of this holy man, faithfulness to his trust, and trust in his God, that as he saith himself, *ver. 7. He brought him* (that is, *Moses* who had sent him) *word again, as it was in his heart*; that is, he did not for fear or favour accommodate himself, but what in his conscience he thought true, that he spake; and this, because it was such an eminent proof of his sincerity, is called by *Moses*, v. 9. *following God fully*; for which the Lord erects such a pillar of remembrance over his head, that shall stand as long as that Scripture it self. To give out one instance more, and that is of *Nathaniel*, at first sight of whom Christ cannot forbear, but lets all about him know, how highly he was in his favour. Behold (saith he of him) *an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile*, John 1. 47. Christs heart (like the babe in *Elizabeths* womb when *Mary* saluted her) seem'd thus to leap at the coming of *Nathaniel*, yea, comes forth in this expression, not to flatter him into an overweeping conceit of himself, (Christ knew what an humble soul he spake to) but to bear witness to his own grace in him, especially this of sincerity; that knowing what a high price and value heaven sets upon the head of this grace, they might like wise Merchants store themselves with it more abundantly; His simplicity of heart made him an *Israelite indeed*; many goodly shews, and pompous outsidings were to be seen among the Phari-

John 7. 52.

sees, but they were a company of base projectours, and designers. Even when some of them came to Christ, extolling him for his sincerity, *Master, we know thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth*, *Matth. 22. 16.* then did they play the hypocrites, and had a plot to decoy him by their glozing speech into danger; as you may perceive, *v. 19. They came that they might intangle him*, but good Nathaniel had no plot in his head, in his coming, but to find the *Messias* he lookt for, and eternal life by him, and therefore though he was for the present wrapt up in that common error of the times, that no Prophet could come out of Galilee, much lesse so great a one as the *Messias*; out of such an obscure place in Galilee, as Nazareth; yet Christ seeing the honesty and uprightnesse of his heart, doth not suffer his ignorance and error to prejudice him in his thoughts of him.

SECT. III.

Now to give some account why this grace of sincerity is so taking with, and delightful to God; that it even captivates him in love to the soul where he finds it. There are two things which are the inseparable companions of sincerity, yea, effects flowing from it, that are very taking to draw love both from God and man.

First, sincerity makes the soul willing; when 'tis clog'd with so many infirmities, as to disable it from the full performance of its duty; yet then the soul stands on tip-toes to be gone after it; as the Hawk upon the hand, as soon as ever it sees her game, launcheth forth, and would be upon the wing after it, though possibly held by its sheath to the fist: Thus the sincere soul is inwardly prick't and provok't by a strong desire after its duty, though kept back by infirmities; a perfect heart and a willing mind are joyn'd together, *1 Chron. 28. 9. 'tis Davids counsel to his sonne Solomon, to serve God with a perfect heart, and a willing mind.* A false heart is a shifting heart, puts off its work so long as it dares, and 'tis little thanks to set about it when the rod is taken down; yet hypocrites are like tops that go no longer

longer than they are whipt; but the sincere soul is ready and forward, it doth not want will to do a duty, when it wants skill and strength how to do it. *The Levites*, 2 Chron. 29. 34. *are said to be more upright in heart, to sanctifie themselves, than the Priests were.* How appear'd that? in this, that they were more forward, and willing to the work. No sooner did the word come out of the good Kings mouth, concerning a reformation, v. 20. but presently the *Levites* arose to sanctifie themselves; but some of the Priests had not such a mind to the businesse, and therefore were not so soon ready, *ver.* 34. shewing more policy than piety therein, as if they would stay, and see first how the times would move, before they would engage. Reformation-work is but an icy path, cowardly spirits love to have well beaten by others, before they dare come on it: But sincerity is of better mettal; like the true traveller, that no weather shall keep him from going his journey when set; The upright man looks not at the clouds, stands not thinking this or that to discourage him, but takes his warrant from the Word of God, and having that, nothing but a counter-mand from the same God that sets him awork, shall turn him back. His heart is uniform to the Will of God. If God saith, *seek my face*, it rebounds and echoes back again, *thy face will I seek*; yea Lord, as if *David* had said with a good will, thy Word is presse-money enough to carry me from this duty to that, whether thou pleasest; may be when the sincere soul is about a duty he doth it weakly, yet this very willingness of the heart is wonderful pleasing to God. How doth it affect and take the father, when he bids his little child go and bring him such a thing (that may be as much as he can well lift) to see him not stand and shrug at the command as hard, but runs to it, and puts forth his whole strength about it, (though at last may be he cannot do it,) yet the willingness of the child pleaseeth him so, that his weaknesse rather stirs up the father to pity and help him, than to provoke him to chide him. Christ throws this covering over his disciples infirmities, *the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*. O! This obedience, that like the dropping honey, comes without squeezing, though but little of it, tastes sweetly on Gods palate, and such is sincere obedience.

Secondly, sincerity makes the soul very open and free so God :
thought

though the sincere soul hath many infirmities, yet it desires to cloak and hide none of this from God, no, if it could, it would not, and this is that which delights God exceedingly. To be sure, hee'l cover what such a soul uncovers; *1 John 1. 2. If we confess our sin, he is just and faithful to forgive.*

It was a high piece of ingenuity and clemency in *Augustus*, that having promised by proclamation a great summe of money, to any that should bring him the head of a famous *Pirate*, did yet when the *Pirate* (who had heard of this) brought it himself to him, and laid it at his foot, not only pardon him for his former offences against him, but reward him for his great confidence in his mercy. Truly thus doth God, though his wrath be revealed against all sin and unrighteousnesse, yet when the soul it self comes freely and humbles it self before him, he cannot stretch forth his arm, to strike that soul which gives such glory to his mercy, and this the sincere heart doth. Indeed the hypocrite when he has sinn'd, hides it, as *Achan* his wedge of gold; he sits brooding on his lust, as *Rachel* on her fathers idols. It is as hard getting a hen off her nest, as such a one to come off his lusts, and disclose them freely to God. If God himself find him not out, he will not bewray himself. I cannot set out the different disposition of the sincere and false heart in this matter, better than by the like in a mercenary servant, and a child; when a servant (except it be one of a thousand) breaks a glasse, or spoils any of his masters goods, all his care is to hide it from his master, and therefore throws the pieces of it away into some dark hole or other, where he thinks they shall never be found; and now he is not troubled for the wrong he hath done his master, but glad that he hath handled the matter so, as not to be discovered. Thus the hypocrite would count himself a happy man, could he but lay his sin out of Gods sight; it is not the treason he dislikes, but fears to be known that he is a traitour: and therefore though it be as unfeasible to blind the eye of the Almighty, as with our hand to cover the face of the Sun, that it should not shine, yet the hypocrite will attempt it. We find a woe pronounced against such; *Isa. 29. 15. Woe unto them that dig deep to hide their counsel from the Lord.* This is a sort of sinners whose care is not to make their

peace

peace when they have offended, but to hold their peace, and stand demurely before God, as *Gehazi before his Master*, as if they had been no where, but where they should be. These are they whom God will put to shame to purpose. The Jews were farre gone in this hypocrisie, when they justified themselves as a holy people, and put God so hard to it, as to make him prove his charge, rather than confesse what was too true and apparent; which God upbraids them for, *Jer. 2. 23. How canst thou say, I am not polluted? I have not gone after Balaam, see thy way in the valley, and know what thou hast done.* Hast thou such a whoreson fore-head to justify thy self, and hypocritical heart to draw a fair cover over so foul practises? would you yet passe for Saints, and be thought a people unpolluted? now mark, 'tis not long, but this hypocritical people, that thus hid their sin, hath shame enough; *As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so (saith the Prophet) ver. 26. is the house of Israel ashamed;* that is, as the thief, who at first is so insolent, as to deny the fact he is accused of, yet when upon search, the stolen goods are found about him, and he brought to justice for it, then he is put to double shame for his theft, and impudence also in justifying himself; so is it with this people (and with all hypocrites) though while in peace, and at ease, they be bragg, and bold; yea, seem to scorn to be thought what they indeed are; yet there is a time coming (which verse 24. is call'd *their month wherein they shall be found*) when Gods hue and cry will overtake them, his terrours ransack their consciences, and bring forth what they so stiffly denyed, making it appear to the selves and others also, what juggling and deceit they have used to shift off their sinne. It is easie to think, what shame will cover their faces, and weigh down their heads while this is doing. God loves to befool those, who think they play their game so wisely, because with *Abab*, they fight against God in a disguise, and will not be known to be the men. But the sincere soul takes another course, and speeds better; as a child when he hath committed a fault, doth not stay till others go, and tell his father what the matter is, nor till his father makes it appear by his frowning countenance, that it is come to his ear, but freely, and of his own accord, goes presently to his father, (being prompted by no other thing, than the love he bears to his dear father, and the for-

row, which his heart grows every moment he stays, bigger, and bigger wihal for his offence) and easeth his aking heart, by a free and full confession of his fault at his fathers foot; and this with such plain-heartednesse, giving his offence the weight of every aggravating circumstance, so that if the Devil himself should come after him, to glean up what he hath left, he should hardly find where-wihal to make it appear blacker; Thus doth the sincere soul to God, adding to his simplicity in confession of his sin, such a flow of sorrow, that God seeing his dear child in such danger of being carried down too far towards despair, (if good news from him come not speedily to stay him) cannot but tune his voice, rather into a strein of comforting him in his mourning, than chiding him for his sin.



CHAP. IX.

Of the odious nature of hypocrisie and hatefulnessse of it to God.

Use 1.

DOth sincerity cover all defects? Then hypocrisie uncovers the soul, and strips it naked to its shame before God, when set forth with the richest embroidery of other excellencies. This is such a scab, that frets into the choicest perfection, and alters the complexion of the soul in Gods eye, more than leprosie or pox can do the fairest face in ours. It is observable, the different character that is given of those two Kings of Judah, *Asa* and *Amasiah*. Of the first, see *1 Kings 15. 14.* *The high places were not removed, nevertheless Asa his heart was perfect with the Lord all his dayes.* He passeth currant for a gracious person, and that with a *non obstante*, nevertheless his heart was perfect; sincerity like true gold hath grains allowed for

for its lightness; his infirmities are not mentioned to stain his honour, and prejudice him in the opinion of any; but rather as the wart or mole, which the cunning Limner expresseth on purpose, the more to set forth the beauty of the other parts; so his failings are recorded to cast a greater lustre upon his sincerity, which could, notwithstanding these sins, gain him such a testimony from Gods own mouth. But of *Amaziah*, see 2 *Chro.* 25. 2. *He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.* The matter of his actions was good, but the scope and drift of his heart in them was naught, and this but makes a foul blot upon all, and turn his right into wrong; wherein his hypocrisy appear'd is express, *King.* 14. 3. *He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like David his father, he did according to all things that Joash his father did.* He did for a while what David did; as to the matter, but imitated Joash as to the manner, whose goodness was calculated to please man rather than God; as appeared in the latter end of his reign upon the death of his good uncle *Jehoiada*; him did *Amaziah* write after, and not David in his uprightness; thus we see *Asa* his uprightness condemns him in the midst of many failings; but hypocrisy condemns *Amaziah* doing that which is right. Sincerity, it is the life of all our graces; and puts life into all our duties; and as life makes beautiful, and keeps the body sweet, so sincerity the soul; and all in doth. A prayer breath'd from a sincere heart, it is heavens delight; take away sincerity, and God saith of it, as *Abraham of Sarah* (whom living, he loved dearly, and laid in his bosome) *bury the dead out of my sight*; he hides his eyes, stops his nostril; as when some poisonous carrion is before us: *Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination to me: the calling of your assemblies I cannot away with; your appointed feast my soul detesteth; they are a trouble to me, I turn away to bear them.* What stinking thing is this, that God cries so out upon; it is nothing but hypocrisy. Surely, friends, that must needs be very loathsome, which makes God speak so contemptuously of his own Ordinances, yea makes them a *Nebuchstan*, prayer no prayer, but a meer idol to be broken in pieces; saith no faith, but a fancy and a delusion; repentance no repentance, but a flood eye, *Psalms* 78. 34. *They returned, and enquired early after God;* see how the Spirit of God glosseth upon this, *verse*

36, 37. nevertheless they did flatter with their lips, and they layd unto him with their tongues, for their heart was not right with him. It smoked God out of his own house, and made him out of love with that place, whereof he had said, it should be his resting place for ever.

It brought the wrath of God upon that unhappy people to the uttermost; mark how the commission runs, which God gave the *Assyrian*, who was the bloody executioner of his fierce wrath upon them, *Isa. 10. 5, 6.* *For the rod of my anger, and the staffe in their hand is mine indignation, I will send him against an hypocritical Nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down as mire in the streets.* There needs not the Coroner to be sent for, or a Jury go upon this miserable people, to find out how they came to their dismal end; they were an hypocritical nation, that was in they dyed of. God had rather see the abomination of desolation standing in his Temple, making havock of all, than the abomination of dissimulation mocking him to his face, while they worship him with their lips, and their lusts, with their hearts. Of the two its more tolerable in Gods account, to see a *Balsam* that never had a name of being his servant, to quaffe and carouse it to his gods, profanely in the bowels of the Sanctuary, than for a people that would passe for his servants, to pollute them in his own worship, by their cursed hypocrisie; if God be dishonoured, woe to that man of all, that doth it under a shew of honouring him. God singles out the hypocrite, as that sort of sinners, whom he would deal with hand to hand, and sen him self even in this life to bear witness against in a more extraordinary manner than others. The thief, murderer, and other the like sinners, provision is made by God, that the Magistrate should meet with them, they come under his cognizance; but the hypocrite, he is one that sins more secretly. God alone is able to find him out, and he hath undertaken it, *Ezek. 14. 7.* *For every one of the house of Israel which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and cometh to a Prophecy to enquire of him concerning me; (an excellent description of a hypocrite; he is one that denies God his heart (reserving it for idols, his lusts) yet is as forward as any, to enquire after God in his Ordinances.)*

See Jer. 7. 10,
12, 13, ver.

I the Lord will answer him by my self. And how shall he answer him? *And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people, and ye shall know that I am the Lord,* ver. 8. that is, my judgments shall be so remarkable on him, that he shall be a spectacle of my wrath for others to see, and speak of. Thus God payes the hypocrite often in this life, as *Ananias and Sapphira*, who died by the hand of God with a lie sticking in their throats; and *Judas*, who purchas'd nothing by his hypocritical trade, but a halter to hang himself withal; his playing the hypocrite with Christ, ended in his playing the Devil upon himself, when he became his own executioner. But if the hypocrite at any time steals out of the world, before his vizard falls off, and the wrath of God falls on him, it will meet him sure enough in hell, and it will be poor comfort to him there, to think how he hath cheated his neighbours, in arriving at hell, whom they so confidently thought under sail for heaven. The good opinion which he hath left of himself in those that are on earth, will cool no flames for him in hell, where lodgings are taken up, and bespoken for the hypocrite, as the chief guest expected in that infernal court; all other sinners seem but as younger brethren in damnation to the hypocrite, under whom as the great heir, they receive every one their portion of wrath, bequeathed to them by the justice of God, *Matthew 24. 51.* there the evil servant is threatened by his Master, that he will cut him asunder, and give him his portion with the hypocrites.

Quest. But why should God be so angry with the hypocrite? He seems a tame creature, to other sinners, that like wild beasts, rage, and raven, not fearing to open their mouth like so many wolves against heaven, as if they would tear God out of his throne by their blasphemies, and horrid impieties. The hypocrite is not thus weeded with impudency, to strut at noon-day, and spread his tene with *Abolom* on the house top as he be naught, it is in a corner, his maiden-blush modesty will not suffer him to declare his sins, and be seen in the company of it abroad; nay, he denies himself of many sins, which others maintain; and walks in exercise of many duties, which the Atheistical spirits of the world deride, and scorn: why then

Quest.

should the hypocrite, that lives like a Saint to others, be more diligent to him?

Ans.

Ans. Indeed the hypocrite at first blush may be taken for a kind of Saint, by such as see only his out-side, as he passeth by in his holy-day drasse; when he is beholding to, for all the reputation he hath in the thoughts of others; and therefore is fely by one called the Strangers Saint, but a Devil to those that know him better: He is like some cunning Creeple, that is faine to borrow help from Art, to hide the defects of nature: such as false hair to cover his baldness, an artificial eye to blind his blindness from others sight; and the like for other parts, here's much ado made to commend him, for some beautiful person to others; but what a monster would this man appear, should one but see him through the key-hole, as he is in his bed-chamber, where all these are laid aside? Truly, such a one, and far more fearful, would the hypocrite be found, when out of his acting robes which he makes use of onely, when he comes forth upon the stage, to play the part of a Saint before others. It were enough to affright us, only to see the hypocrite unmasked; what then will it be to himself, when he shall be laid open before men, and Angels? so odious this generation is to God, that it is not like standing near them; *Moses* that knew *Cain*, *Dan*, and *Abiram* better than the people, (who taken with their seeming zeal, flock't after them in throngs) commands them to depart from the Tents of those wicked men, except they had a mind to be consumed with them; such horrid hypocrite expected vengeance would soon overtake. But that it may appear to be an exceeding sinfull, I shall give a few aggravations of it, in which so many reasons will be wrapt, why it is so odious to God.

First; Hypocrisie is a sin that offers violence to the very sight of nature; That light which convinceth us there is a God, tells us he is to be served, and that in truth also, for all is to no purpose. A lye is a sin that would lye on the face of a Heathen, and hypocrisie is the loudest lye, because it is given to God himself; so *Peter* told that disssembling wretch, *Acts* 4. 3. *Why haist thou filled thy heart to lye to the holy Ghost?* 4. 4. *thou hast lyled not to man, but unto God.*

2.

Secondly, Hypocrisie cannot so properly be said to be one single sin

sin, as the sinfulness of other finnes; it is among sins, as sincerity among graces; now that is not one grace but an ornament; that beautifies and graces all other graces. The preciousness of *faith* is, that it is unfeigned, and of it we to be without dissimulation. Thus the odiousness of finnes is, when they are committed in hypocrisy. *David* aggravates the sinne of those jeering companions, who made him their table-talk, and could not taste their cheer, except season'd with some salt jest quibb'd out at him, with this, that they were hypocritical mockers. *Psalm* 3. 6. they did it slyly; and wrapt up their scoffs: (his like) in such language as might shake some think, (who'd not well observe them) that they applauded him. There is a way of commending, which some have learnt to use, when they meant to cast the greatest scorn upon those they hate bitterly, and these hypocritical mockers deserve the chair to be given them from all other scoffers. Beavers are counted malignant, according to the degree of putrefaction that is in them. Hypocritical sin is the very putrefaction, and rottenness of the heart; the more of this putrid stuff there is in any sin, the more malignant it is. *David* speaks of the iniquity of his sin, *Psalm* 3. 2. 3. I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. This sin seems very probably to have been his adultery with *Bathsheba*, and murder of *Uriah*, by his long keeping silence, ver. 3. by the pardon he had immediately given in upon confessing, ver. 4. which we know *Nathan* delivered to him, and by his further purpose to continue confessing of it, which appeared by the mournful *Psalm* 51. that followed upon his discourse with *Nathan*. Now *David* to make the pardoning mercy of God more illustrious, saith, he did not only forgive his sin, but the iniquity of his sin; and what was that? surely the worst that can be said, of that his complicated sin, is, that there was so much hypocrisy in it; he wofully juggled with God and marrin it; this I do not doubt to say, was the iniquity of his sin, and put a colour deeper on it, than the blood which he shed. And the rather I say the secret there, because God himself, when he would set out the heinousness of this sin, seems to do it rather from the hypocrisy in the fact, than the fact it self, as appears by the testimony given this holy man,

1 Kings 15. 5. David did that which was right in the eye of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him, all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite; were there not other wry steps that David took besides this? doth the Spirit of God by excepting this, declare his approbation of all, that else he ever did? no sure, the Spirit of God records other sinnes, that escape this eminent servant of the Lord. But all those are drown'd here, and this mentioned as the only stain of his life. But why? surely because there appear'd lesse sincerity, yea more hypocrisie in this one sinne, than in all his other put together; though David in them was wrong as to the matter of his actions, yet his heart was more right in the manner of committing them. But here his sincerity was sadly wounded, though not to the total destruction of the habit, yet so lay it in a long swoon as to any actings thereof. And truly the wound went very deep, when that grace was stabbed, in which did run the life-blood of all the rest. We see then, God had reason (though his mercy prompted him, yea his Covenant obliged him, not to let his child die of this wound, I mean finally miscarry of this sinne, either through want of repentance on the one hand, or pardoning mercy on the other) to so heal it, that a scar might remain upon the place, a mark upon the sinne, whereby others might know how odious hypocrisie is to God.

3.

Thirdly, those considerations which may seem at first to lessen, and pare off something from the hainousnesse of the hypocrites sinne, viz. that he walks in a prodigious habit, hath a form of piety, which others want, performs duties that others neglect. These and the like, are so far from taking from, that they add a further weight of aggravation to them. Let us consider the hypocrite in a twofold respect, and this will appear either in things he trades about, or secondly in the things he layes claim to; these are both high, and famous; and therein these can be no ordinary sin. For if things he trades in, are duties of Gods worship, the things he layes claim to, are relation to God, interest in Christ, consolations of the spirit, and the like; these are things of high price; as misarrangers about these, must be somewhat suitable to their high nature, and as it is the web, so the thread, and death to use of life. The profane person

person pretends not to these, he cannot spin so fine a thread, because the work he deals in is counterfeiter; all his impieties will not have so high price of wrath set upon them, which he hath (being ignorant of God, and a stranger to the wayes of God), committed; as the hypocrites.

SECT. I.

First, the hypocrite trades in the duties of Gods worship. *Judas* sits down with the rest of the *Apostles* at the Passover, and bids himself welcome as confidently, as if he were the best guest, the honest of all the company. The proud *Pharisee* gets to the Temple as soon as the broken-hearted *Publican*; but what work doth the hypocrite make with these things? that would be known indeed. Sad work (the Lord knowes) or else God would not so abominate them, as to think he hears a dog bark, or a wolf howl all the while they are praying. We think *David* had a curious hand at the Harp, that could pacifie the evil, raging spirit of melancholy *Saul*; But what a harsh unhappy stroke have they in the duties of Gods worship, that are able to make the sweet meek spirit of God angry, yea, break out into fury against them? And no wonder if we consider but these two things.

First, the hypocrite does no lesse than mock God in all his duties, and of all things God can least bear that, *God will not be mocked*. Christ preached this doctrine, when he cursed the fig-tree, which did by her green leaves mock the passenger, making him come for fruit; and go ashamed without any; had it wanted leaves as well as fruit, it had escaped that curse. Every lie is a mocking of him to whom tis told; because such a one goes to cheat him, and thereby puts the fool upon him. *Why hast thou mock'd me* (said *Dalila* to *Sampson*) and told me lies? *Judg. 16. 10.* as if she had said (as is usual upon the like with us) do you make a fool of me? I leave into the hypocrite to think seriously what he is going to make of God, when he puts up his hypocritical services. Gods command was, none should appear before him empty; this the hypocrite doth, and therefore mocks God, he becomes indeed full-mouth'd, but empty-hearted.

As to the formality of a duty he oft exceeds the sincere Christian; he, if any, may truly be called a *Master of Ceremonies*; because all that he entertains God with in duty, lies in the courtship of his tongue and knee. How abhorrent this is to God, may easily be judged by the disdain, which even a wise man would expresse to be so served; better to pretend no kindnesse, than pretending to intend none; 'tis the heart God looks at in duty; if the Wine be good, he can drink it out of a wooden cup; but let the cup be never so gilded, and no Wine in it, he makes account that man mocks him, that would put it into his hand. It was Christs charge against *Sardis*, *Rev. 3. 2. I have not found thy works perfect before God*; I have not found them *even thus alive, full before God*, as the original hath it. Sincerity fills our duty, and all our actions; and mark that phrase *before God*, which implies that this Church retained such an outward form of devotion, as might keep up her credit before men; she had a name to live, but her works were not full before God; he pierced them deeper than mans probe could go, and judgeth her by what he found her within.

2.

Secondly, the hypocrite performs the duties of Gods worship on some base design or other, and this makes him yet more abominable to God, who disdaineth to have his holy Ordinances prostituted to serve the hypocrites lust, used only as a stream to turn about his Mill, and handiely effect his carnal projects. When *Abalom* had formed his plot, within his own natural bosome, and was bigge with his treason, as ever Cockatrice was with her poisonous egges, to *Helen* he goes in all haste, and that (forsooth) to pay an old vow, which in the time of his affliction he had made to the Lord, *1 Sam. 15. 10, 11*. Who would not think the man was grown honest, when he begins to think of paying his old debts? but the wretch meant nothing lesse, his errand thither was to lay his treason under the warm wing of Religion, that the reputation he should gain thereby, might help the sooner to hatch it. And I wish that as *Abalom* died without a Sonne to keep his name in remembrance; so that none had been left behind to inherit his cursed hypocrisie; that the world might have grown into a happy ignorance of so monstrous a sin; but alas, this is but a vain wish, *vivit, inquit, in Templum venit*, this kind of hypocrite yet lives,

lives, yea comes as boldly to out-face God in his Worship as ever; many making no better use of the exercise of it, than some do of their Sedans, to carry them unseen to the enjoyment of their lust. And is it any wonder, that God who hath appointed his Ordinances for such high and holy ends, should abhorre the hypocrite, who thus debaseth them in the service of the devil? Did you invite some to a costly feast at your house, who instead of feeding on the dainties you have provided for them, should take and throw all to their dogs under the table, now would you like your guest? The hypocrite is he that calls Gods holy things to his dogs. God invites us to his Ordinances, as to a rich feast, where he is ready to entertain us, in sweet communion with himself; what horrid impiety is it then that the hypocrite commits? Who when he is set at Gods table, feeds not of these dainties himself, but throws all to his lusts, some to his pride, and some to his covetousness; propounding to himself no other end in coming to them, than to make provision for these lusts, as *Hamor and Sechem* his son, who when they would persuade the people of their City to submit to circumcision, used this as the great argument to move them, that they should grow rich by the hand. *Every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised, shall not their cattle and their substance, and every beast of theirs be ours?* Gen. 34. 21, 22. A goodly Argument, was it not, in a balmell of such a high nature, as coming under a solemn Ordinance? they rather speak as if they were going to a *Horse-market*, or *Con-fair*, than to a religious duty. Truly, though most hypocrites have more wit, than thus to print their thoughts, and let the world read what is writ in their hearts, yet as *Queen Mary* said of *Calis*, if she were flip up, it would be found in her heart, so some such low things, as vain-glory, world-pride, &c. would be found engraven in the breast of all hypocrites, as that which they most aim at in the duties of Religion.

SECT.

SECT. II.

2.

Secondly, consider the hypocrite in the things he layes claim to, and they are no small priviledges; relation to God, interest in Christ; who more forward to Saint himself, to pretend to the graces and comforts of the Spirit than the hypocrite; as we see in the Pharisees, whose great design was to get a name, and that not such as the great ones of the earth have for prowess, worldly majesty and the like, but for sanctity and holinesse, and they had it, if it would do them any good. *Verily, saith Christ, they have their reward, Mat. 6. 2.* They would be thought for great Saints, and so they are by the multitude, who did so applaud them for their holinesse, which faced their outside, that they had a proverb, If but two could be saved, one of the two should be a Pharisee. We read of some that *professe they know God, but in works they deny him, Tit. 1. 16.* They boldly brag of their acquaintance with God, and would be thought great favourites of his, though their lives are *Antipodes* to heaven: so *Rev. 3. 9.* we meet with some *that say they are Jews, and are not, but lye.* They dwell sure by ill neighbours, none would say so much for them, but themselves; the hypocrite is so ambitious to passe for a Saint, that he commonly is a greater censurer of the true graces of others, as too much hindring the prospect of his own; like *Herod*, who (as *Eusebius* writes) being troubled at the basenesse of his own birth, burnt the *Jews* ancient *Genealogies*, the better to defend his own pretended noble descent. Who now is able to give a full account to this high climbing sinner of hypocrite? It is a sinne that highly reproacheth God, to have such a vile wretch claim kindred with him. Christ indeed is not ashamed to call the poorest Saints *brethren*, but he disdains to have his name seen upon a rotten-hearted hypocrite; as Princes to have their effigies stampd on base mettals; what scorn was put upon that mock-Prince, *Perkin Warbeck*, who (having got some fragments of Courtship, and tutor'd how to act his part) was presented to the world as sonne to *Edward the fourth* of this Nation, but when he had aped a while the

the state of a Prince, was taken, and with his base ignoble pedigree (writ in great letters) pinn'd at his back, sent about, that where-ever he came, he might carry his shame with him, till in the end he was sent to act the last part of his play at the Gallows. But what is all this to the hypocrites portion? who for abusing others here with a seeming sanctity, as if indeed he was of heavenly extraction, a child of God, and heire of glory, shall be brought at the great Day to be hissed, and hooted at by men and Angels, and after he hath been put to this open shame, be throwa deepest into hell. Of all sinners he doth most mischief in this world, and therefore shall have most torment in the other. There is a double mischief which none stand at like advantage to do as the hypocrite by his seeming Saintship. The one he doth while his credit holds, and he passeth for a child of God in the opinion of his neighbours; the other when his reputation is cracked, and he discovered to be what he is, a hypocrite. The mischief he doth when his mask is on, is, as a deceiver; *Macbeth* knew what he did in commending to Princess resemblance of Religion, though he forbade any more; It hath been found the most taking bait, to decoy people into their snare, who come in space, when Religion is the flag that is set up. *Ehad* could not have thought on a surer key to open all doors, and procure him admittance into King *Egbus* presence, than to give out he had a message from the Lord to him; this raised such an expectation, and bred such a confidence, that room is made for him; presently all depart, and he left alone with the King; yes, the King will rise to hear this message that comes from the Lord, and so gives him a greater advantage to run him into the guts; had not some in our days pretended highly to Saintship, I doubt not, but they would have found the door shut, where now they have too much welcome, and find it easie to procure belief to their errors. Even the Elect are in some danger, when one cried up for a Saint, is the messenger that brings the error to town, and that under the notion of a message from God; I confesse the hypocrite acts his part so handsomly, that he may do some good accidentally, his glistering profession, heavenly discourse, excellent gifts in prayer or preaching, may affect much the sincere soul, and be an occasion of real good to his soul, as the stage-player, though his tears be counterfeit,

may stir up by his seeming passion; real sorrow in his spectators, so as to make them weep in earnest; thus the hypocrite acting his part with false affections, may be a means to draw forth, and excite the Christians to griefs; but then is such a one much more in danger to be ensnared by his error, because he will not be readily suspicious of any thing that he brings, whom he hath found really helpful to his grace or comfort; and thus the good the hypocrite doth, makes him but able to do the greater hurt in the end. *Sister* a had better have gone without *Patch* butter and milk, than by them to be laid asleep against the came with her nails; and it had been a happier for many in our dayes, not to have tasted of the gife, and seeming sweets of some, than to have been forsaken with this sweet wine, as to drink themselves drunk into an admiration of their persons, which hath laid them asleep, and thereby given to them whom they have applauded so much, but advantage on more easily to fasten their nails to their heads, or tails I mean, in their judgments. The other mischief the hypocrite doth is, when discovered; and that is as he is a scandal to the ways of God, and servants of God. It is said of *Samson*, he did which he shew at his death, were more than they which he shew in his life, *Judges 16:30*. Truly the hypocrite doth more hurt when he is discovered, which is the death of his profession, than when he seemed to be alive. The wicked world that are not long seeking a fesse to bear the Saints with, have now one put into their hand by the hypocrite. O how they can run division upon this harsh note, and besmear the face of all professors with the dirt they see upon one false brothers coat; as if they could take the length of all their feet, by the measure of one hypocrite; hence comes such base language as this; they are all of a pack, not one better than another; indeed this is very absurd reasoning, as if one should say, no corn were currant, and right silver, because now and then a brass shilling is found amongst the rest; but this language fits the mouth of the ungodly world; and woe be to the man that makes these arrows for them by his hypocrisy, which they shoot against the Saints; better he had been thrown with a millstone about his neck into the sea, than have lived to give such an occasion for the enemy to blaspheme.

CHAP. X.

Where all are stirred up to put themselves upon
the tryal whether sincere or not. Three Arguments
used to provoke to the work, and some
false Characters, by which the hypocrite flatters
himself into a conceit of being upright.

Secondly, doth sincerity cover all a Saints infirmities? this
shows how behooful it is for every one to try his wayes,
and search narrowly his heart, whether he be sincere or hypocri-
tical.

Use 2.

SECT. I.

First, all depends on it, even all thou art worth in another
world; 'tis thy making or marring for ever, Psalm 125. 5.
Do good, O Lord, to them that are upright in heart; as for such as
turn aside to crooked wayes, the Lord will lead them forth with
the marker of iniquity; that is the end the hypocrite is sure to
come to; (he would indeed then faine passe for a Saint, and
crowd in among the godly, but God shall lead him forth with
workers of iniquity, company that better besies him, 'tis sin-
cerity shall carry it in that day. I will come (saith Paul) 1 Cor.
4. 19. to you shortly, and will know, not the speech of them that
are puffed up, but the power; for the Kingdom of God, is not in
word, but power: What will ye? shall I come unto you with a

rod, or in love? O friends, not *Paul*, but Christ will shortly come unto us, and he will know the speech, and soothing language of such as are puffed up with an empty name of profession, but will know, the power, gage the heart, and see what is in it: now will ye that he come with a rod, or in love? to judge you as hypocrites, or to give you the *Edge* of a faithful servant? doth not he spend his time ill, that takes pains in his trade, and lays out all his stock upon such a commodity, which when he opens his Stall, will be seized for false ware, and he clapped up for abusing the countrey? all that ever the hypocrite did, will in the great day of Christ be found counterfeit, and he sure to be laid by the heels in hell, for going about to cheat God and man; every mans works shall then be manifest, that day shall declare it. Even the sincere Christian where he hath tampered with hypocrisy, shall lose that his work, but the hypocrite with his work his soul also.

2.

Secondly, consider hypocrisy lies close in the heart; if thou beest not very careful, thou mayest easily passe a false judgment on thy self; they who were sent to search the Cellar under the *Parliament*, at first saw nothing but coals and winter provision, but upon a review, when they came to throw away that stuf, they found all but provision for the Devils Kitchen; then the mystery of iniquity was uncased, and the Barrels of Powder appear'd. How many are there, that from some duties of piety they perform, some seeming zeal they expresse in profession, presently cry, *omnia bene*, and are so kind to themselves, as to vote themselves good Christians, who, did they but take the pains to throw these aside, they might find a foul hypocrite at the bottome of them all; hypocrisy often takes up her lodging next door to sincerity, and so she passes unsound, the soul not suspecting hell can be so near heaven. And as hypocrisy, so sincerity is hard to be discovered; this grace often lyes low in the heart, (like the sweet violet in some valley, or near some brook) hid with thorns and nettles; infirmities I mean; so that there requires both care and wisdom, that we neither let the weed of Hypocrisy stand, nor pluck up the herb of Grace in its stead.

-8

Thirdly, tis feasible; I do not let you about an endless work; the heart of man I confesse is as a ruffled skein of silk, not easily

gly unscarred, yet with a faithful use of the means, it may be dis-
intangled, and wound up on the right bottom of sincerity or hy-
pocrite. *Jeh*, when Satan and his cruel friends laboured to royl
his spirit most, and muddy the stream of his former course and con-
dition; (by throwing their objections as so many stones into it;) yet
he could see this precious gem at the bottom, sparkling most
brightly; yea, *Hezekiah* in the very brim of the grave, recreates
his spirit with it. Indeed (friends) this is a souls encouragement,
that it shall not want Gods help in this search; if it goes about it
with honest desires. A *Justice* will not only give his warrant to
search a suspicious house, but if need be, will command others to
be aiding to him in the business; Word, Ministers, Spirit, all thou
shalt have for thy assistance in this work; only have a care thou
dost not mock God in the business; that soul deserves to be dam-
ned to this sin, who in the search for hypocrisie, plays the hypo-
crite, like a naughty dishonest Constable, that willingly over-
looks him whom he searcheth for, and then says he cannot find
him.

Now, for the fuller satisfaction in this point, and help in the
tryal, because 'tis that which both good and bad are mistaken in,
the carnal wretch flattering himself, his heart is good and hon-
est; the sincere soul kept under fear of being a hypocrite; Satan
abusing them both; I shall therefore first lay down the grounds of
an hypocrite, with which he shores up his rotten house, and shew
the falsities of them. Secondly, I will lay down the grounds of the
weak Christians fear for his being a hypocrite, and the weaknesse
of them. Thirdly, some positive discoveries of sincerity, which
no hypocrite ever did, or can reach to.

SECT. II.

First, for the hypocrite, he will stand upon his defence; his
heart is sincere; well, how will he prove it?

First, the hypocrite will say, Sure I am no hypocrite, for I can-
not endure it in another.

Answer. This is not enough to clear thee from being a hypocrite,
except thou can shew thou dost this from a holy ground. *Jeh*
that ask't *Jehonadak* whether his heart was right, carried at that
same

same time a false one in his own breast. It is very ordinary for a man to decry that in another, and smartly to decyfe against it, which he all the while harbours himself. How severe was *Judah* against *Tamar*! he commands in all haste to burn her, *Gen. 38. 24.* who would not have thought this man to be chaste? yet he was the very person that had defiled her. There may be a great cheat in this piece of zeal; sometimes the very place a man is in, may carry him as the *primum mobile* does the stars, in a motion which his own *Genius* and liking would never lead him to; Thus many that are Magistrates give the Law to drunkards and swearers, meerly to keep the decorum of their place, and shun the clamour that would arise from their neglect, who can possibly do both, when they meet with place and company fit for their purpose. Some their zeal against anothers sin is kindled at the disgrace which reflects upon them by it, in the eye of the world; and this falls out, when the sin is publick and the person that committed it stands related; this is conceiv'd to be *Judahs* case, who was willing his daughter should be taken out of the way, that the blot which she had brought on his family, might with her be out of sight. Some again find in a thriving trade, and make this advantage of inveighing against others faults, to hide their own the better, that they may carry on their own designs with lesse suspicion. *Abime* after he had his fathers government, as a stirrup to tie himself into the saddle. *John* lov'd the Crown more than he hated *Herod* his whoredomes, for all his loud cry against them. In a word (for tis impossible to hit all) there may be much of revenge in it, and the person is rather mov'd at, than his sin; this was observ'd of *Anthony's* zeal against *Augustus*, *odit tyrannum, amavit tyrannidem*; he hated the Tyrant, but lov'd well enough the tyranny.

2.

Secondly, saith the hypocrite, I am bold, and fearlesse in dangers, sure I am no hypocrite. *Pearls in the net*. *Surprizeth the hypocrite*. But tis the righteous that is bold as a Lion.

Answ.

The better way sure, were to try thy boldness by thy sincerity, than to conclude thy sincerity by thy boldness. Thy confidence, and a spirit undaunted at death and danger, are glorious things, when the Spirit and Word of Christ stand by to vouch

vouch them, when the creature can give some account of the hope that is in him, as *Paul* who shews how he came by it. This Christian (not *Romane*) courage, *Rom.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. many rooms he passeth before he comes to this, which indeed joyns upon heaven it self; faith is the key which lets him into all. First, it opens the door of justification, and lets it into a state of peace, and reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ; *being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, v. 1.* through this he passeth on to another, the presence-chamber of Gods favour, and is admitted nigh unto him, as a traitor once pardoned is, *by whom also we have access by him into this grace wherein we stand, v. 2.* that is, we have not only our sins pardoned, and our persons reconciled to God by faith in Christ; but now under Christs wing, we are brought to Court as it were, and stand in his grace as favourites before their Prince; this opens into a third, and *rejoyce in the hope of glory*; we do not only at present enjoy the grace and favour of God, and communion with him here, but have from this a hope firmly planted in our hearts for heavens glory hereafter. Now he is brought to the most inward room of all, which none can come at, but he that goes through all the former, ver. 3. *And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also.* If thou hast not entred at these doors, thou art a thief and a robber; thou gettest thy confidence too quickly to have it brought to thy hand by God; if God means thee well for eternity, he'll make thee smart for this thy boldnesse, as he did *Jacob* for stealing his fathers blessing; and therefore content not thy self with a bare boldnesse and confidence in dangers; but enquire whether it hath a Scripture bottome; and basis to stand on, or whether the pillars supporting it, be not ignorance in thy mind, and stupidity in thy conscienc; if the latter, thou art in a sad condition; thy boldnesse will last no longer than thou seest it doth in one that is drunk; who when he is wine-sprung thinks (as they say, he can skip over the Moon) and ventures to go without fear upon precipices, and pit-falls; but when sober, trembles to see what he did in his drunken fit. *Nabal* that fear'd nothing when drunk, his heart dies within him, and he came as a stone, at the story. *Abigail* told him in the morning, when the wine was gone out of him; therefore as he when his cause miscarried, through the sleepinesse of the Judge on the

1 Sam. 25. 37.

(Q)

Bench,

Bench, *appeal'd from the Judge asleep, to the Judge awake*, so do I here with you, that through the present stupidity of conscience are bold and fearless of death, and from this plead your uprightness. I appeal from your conscience asleep, to the sentence it will give when it shall be awake, which I wish may be in this world, that you may see your mistake where you may amend it.

Quest. 3.

Thirdly, sure saith another, I am not an hypocrite, for I perform secret duties in my closet; the hypocrite he is no body, except on the stage; it is the brand of the hypocrite, he courts the world for its applause, and therefore does all abroad.

Ans.

Ans. Though the total neglect of secret duties in Religion, speaks a person to be an hypocrite, yet the performing of duties in secret, will not demonstrate thee a sincere person; hypocrisy is in this like the frogs brought on *Egypt*, no place was free of them, no not their bed-chambers; they crept into their most inward rooms, and so doth hypocrisy into closet-duties, as well as publick; indeed though the place be secret where such duties are performed, yet the matter may be so handled; (and is by some hypocrites) that they are not secret in their closets; like the hen who goes into a secret place to lay her egge, but by her cackling tells all the house where she is, and what she is doing. But where this is not, 'tis not enough; for we must not think but some hypocrites may and do spin a thread finer than other; in all Arts there are some exceed others, and so in this trade of hypocrisy; the gross hypocrite, whose drift is to deceive others, his Religion commonly is all without doors; but there is an hypocrite that labours to keep a fair quarter with himself, and is very desirous to make conscience on his side, which to procure, he'll go to the utmost linck of his chain, and do any thing that may not separate him and his beloved lusts; now secret prayer and other duties, may be so performed, as that they shall not more prejudice a mans lusts than any other; 'tis not the sword, though very sharp, that kills, but the force that it is thrust withal; indeed there are some secret duties, as examination of our hearts, trying of our ways, and serious meditation of the threatnings of the Word, against such sins as we find in our own bosomes, with close application of them to our selves, would put sin hard to it; but the hypocrite can lay this sword so easily and favourably on; that his lusts shall not cry oh at it; therefore still there needs a *melius inquirendum*, a fuller search before thou canst come off.

Fourthly.

Fourthly, sure I am not an hypocrite, for: I do not only pray (and that in secret too) against my sins, but I also fight against them, yea, and that to good purpose; for I can shew you the spoils of my victories, that I have got over some of them. There was a time I could not go by the Ale-house; but my lust bid me stand, and pull'd me in, but now I thank God, I have got such a mastery of my drunken lust, that I can passe by without looking in.

Quest. 4.

Ans. 'Tis good what thou dost say, and I wish all thy drunken neighbours could speak as much; that when the Magistrate will nor, or cannot spoil that drunken trade, they that keep those shops for the Devil, might even shut up their windows for want of customers. But is it not pity that what is good should be marr'd in the doing? yet 'tis too common, and may be thy case.

Ans.

First, let me ask thee how long it hath been thus with thee; lusts (as to the agings I mean) are like agues, the fit is not always on, and yet the man not rid of his disease; and some mens lust like some agues, have not such quick returns as others. The river doth not move always one way; now 'tis coming, anon falling water, and though it doth not rise when it falls, yet it hath not lost its other motion. Now the tide of lust is up, and anon 'tis down, and the man recoyls, and seems to run from it, but it returns again upon him; who would have thought to have seen *Pharaoh* in his mad fit again, that should have been with him in his good mood, when he bid *Moses* and the people go? but alas the man was not altered: thus may be when a strong occasion comes, this (like an easterly wind to some of our ports) will bring in the tide of thy lust so strongly, that thy soul that seem'd as clear of thy lust, as the naked sands are of water, will be in a few moments covered, and as deep under their waves as ever. But the longer the banks have held the better; yet shouldst thou never more be drunk as to the outward fulfilling of the lust, yet this is not enough to clear thee from being an hypocrite.

Secondly, therefore let me ask thee what was the great motive to take thee off. That may be as bad (in some sense) which keeps thee from the Ale-house now, as that which heretofore drew thee to it. 'Tis ordinary for one lust to spoil anothers market; he that should save his money from guzling it down his throat, to lay on more finery on his back; what doth this man but rob one lust to sacrifice it to another? whether was it God or man, God or thy

purse, God or thy pride, God or thy reputation that knockt thee off? if any but God prevail'd with thee; Hypocrite is a name will better now become thee, than when in the Ale-house. Again, if God, what apprehensions of God were they that did it? some, the wrath of God for some particular sin hath so shakt, (that as one scared with an apparition in a room, cares not for lying there any more) so they dare not, at least for a long time be acquainted with that practice again; and as it is not the room but the apparition that the one dislikes, so not the sin, but the wrath of God that haunts it, which the other flees from. In a word, may be thou hast laid down this sinful practice, but didst thou hate it, and love God, and so leave it? Thou art become strange to one, have you not got acquaintance with any other in the room of it? thou hast laid down the commission of an evil, but hast thou taken up thy known duty? he is a bad husband that drains his ground, and then neither sows nor plants it: It's all one if it had been under-water, as drain'd and not improved; what if thou cease to do evil (if it were possible) and thou learn'st not to do well? 'tis not thy fields being clear of weeds, but fruitful in corn, pays thy rent, and brings thee in thy profit; nor thy not being drunk, unclean, or any other sin, but thy being holy, gracious, thy having faith unfeigned, pure love and the other graces which will prove thee sound, and bring in evidence for thy interest in Christ, and through him of heaven.



CHAP. XI.

*The weak grounds whereby tempted souls argue
against their own uprightness.*

WE proceed to the false grounds, from which sincere souls do many times go about to prove themselves hypocrites, yea for a while conclude they are such.

First, sure I am an hypocrite saith the poor soul, or else I should not be as I am; God would not thus follow me on with one blow after another, and suffer Satan also to use me as he doth: This was the grand battery *Jobs* friends had against his sincerity; and sometimes Satan so far prevails, as to make the sincere soul set it against his own breast, saying much like him, *If God be with us, why is all this befallen us?* If God be in us by his grace, why appears he against us?

Ans. This fire into which God casts thee, proves thou hast dross; and if because thou art held long in the furnace, thou shouldst say, thou hadst much dross, I would not oppose; but how thou shouldst spell hypocrite out of thy afflictions, and troubles, I marvel; The wicked indeed make much use of this argument to clap hypocrite on them; but the Christian methinks should not use it against himself; though the *Barbarians* presently gave their verdict upon sight of the Viper on *Paul's* hand, that he was a murderer, yet *Paul* thought no worse of himself for it. Christian, give but the same counsel to thy self, when in affliction and temptation, that thou usest to do to thy fellow brethren in the same condition, and thou wilt get out of this snare; darest thou think thy neighbour an hypocrite, meely from the hand of God upon him? no I warrant thee, thou rather

R.

Ans.

ther piteest him, and helpeth him to answer the doubts that arise in his spirit from this very argument. It would make one smile to see how handsomely and roundly a Christian can untie the knots and scruples of another; who afterward, when brought into the like condition, is gravell'd with the same himself; he that helpt his friend over the stile, is now unable to stride it himself; God so orders things that we should need one another. She that is Mid-wife to others, cannot well do that office to her self; Nor he that is the messenger to bring peace to the spirit of another, able to speak it to his own; the case is clear, Christian; affliction cannot prove thee an hypocrite, which wert thou without altogether, thou mightst safer think thou wert a bastard; the case I say is clear, but thy eyes are held for some further end God hath to bring about by thy affliction. But may be thou wilt say, 'tis not simply the affliction makes thee think thus of thy self; but because thou art so long afflicted, and in the dark also, as to any sense of Gods love in thy soul. Thou hast no smiles from Gods sweet countenance to alleviate thy affliction, and if all were right, and thou a sincere child of God, would thy heavenly Father let thee lie groaning, and never look in upon thee, to lighten thy affliction with his sweet presence? As to the first of these, (the length of thy affliction.) I know no standard God hath set for to measure the length of his Saints crosses by; and it becomes not us to make one our selves; which we do, when we thus limit his chastisements to time, that if they exceed the day, we have writ down in our own thoughts, (which is like to be short enough, if our hasty hearts may appoint) then we are hypocrites. For the other thou must know, God can without any impeachment to his love, hide it for a while; and truly he may take it very ill, that his children who have security enough given them, for his loving them (besides the sensible manifestation of it to their souls) should call this in question, for nor coming to visit them, and take them up in his armes when they would have him: In a word, may be thy affliction comes in the nature of purging Physick, God intends to evacuate some corruption by it, which endangers thy spiritual health, and hinders thy thriving in godlinesse. Now the manifestation of his love, God may reserve (as the Physicians do their Cordials) to be given when the Physick is over.

Secondly,

Secondly, I fear I am a hypocrite, saith the tempted soul; why else are there such decays and declensions to be found in me? 'tis the character of the upright, that he goes from strength to strength; but I go backward from strength to weakness. Some Christians they are like those that we call close men in the world; if they lose any thing in their trade, and all goes not as they would have it, we are sure to hear of that over and over again; they speak of their losses in every company; but when they make a good market, and gains come in apace, they keep this to themselves, not forward to speak of them. If Christians would be ingenuous, they should tell what they get, as what they lose. But to take it for granted, that thou dost find a decay, and direct our answer to it.

Ans. 1. I grant it as true, that the sincere soul grows stronger and stronger; But how? even as the tree grows higher and bigger, which we know meets with a fall of the leaf, and Winter, that for a while intermits its growth; thus the sincere soul may be put to a present stand by some temptation; as *Peter*, who was far from growing stronger when he fell from professing, to denying, from denying Christ, to swearing, and cursing if he knew him; yet as the tree when Spring comes, revives and gains more in the Summer, than it loseth in the Winter; so doth the sincere soul, as we see in *Peter*; whose grace that squatted in for a while, came forth with such a force, that no cruelty from men could drive it in ever after; shaking temptations end in settlement, according to the Apostles prayer, *1 Pet. 5. 10. The God of all grace, after ye have suffered awhile, makes you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

Ans. 1.

Secondly, there is great difference between the decay of a sincere soul, and of an hypocrite. The hypocrite declines out of an inward dislike of the wayes of God; hence they are called *backsliders in heart*, *Prov. 14. 14.* So long as they serv'd his lust, and contributed any help to the obtaining his worldly interest, so long he had a seeming zeal; but that argument taken away, he begins to remit by degrees, till he comes to be key-cold, yea as heartily sick of his profession, as *Amnon* of *Tamar*; when the hypocrite begins to fall, he goes apace, like a stone down the hill, knows no ground but the bottom; now speak freely poor soul, darest thou say that there is an inward dislike to the wayes of God?

2.

God; may be thou doest pray, not with that heat and fervency which thou hast, but is it because thou doest not like the duty as formerly? thou doest not hear the Word with such joy, but doest thou not therefore hear it with more sorrow? In a word, canst thou not say with the Spouse, *when thou sleepest, thy heart waketh*, Cant. 5. 2. that is, thou art not pleased with thy present declining state, but heartily wishest thou wert out of it; as one that hath a great desire to rise, and be at his work (his heart is awake) but he is not able at present to shake off that sleep which binds him down; this will clear thee from being an hypocrite.

3. Thirdly, I fear, saith the poor soul, I am an hypocrite, because I have such a divided heart in the duties I perform; I cannot for my life enjoy any privacy with God in duty, but some base lust will be crowding into my thoughts when I am at prayer, hearing of the Word, or meditating; now I am lift up with a self-applauding thought, anon cast down to the earth with a worldly thought; what with one and another, little respite have I from such company. And do such vermin breed any where but in the dunghill of a false hypocritical heart?

Ans. Woe were it to the best of Saints, if the meer rising and stirring of such thoughts as these (or worse than these) did prove the heart unsound; take heed thou concludest not thy state therefore from the presence of these in thee, but from the comportment and behaviour of thy heart towards them. Answer therefore to these few interrogatories, and possibly thou mayest see thy sincerity through the mist these have raised in the soul.

1. First, what friendly welcome have such thoughts with thee, when they present themselves to thee in duty? Are these the guests thou hast expected, and trimmed thy room for? didst go to duty to meet those friends, or do they unmannerly break in upon thee, and forcibly carry thee (as Christ foretold of Peter in another case) whither thou wouldst not? if so, why shouldst thou bring thy sincerity into dispute? doest thou not know the Devil is a bold intruder, and dares come where he knows there is none will bid him sit down, and that soul alone he can call his own house, where he finds rest? *Luke 12. 24.* suppose in your family, as you are kneeling down to prayer,

prayer, a company of roysters should stand under your window, and all the while you are praying, they would be roaring and hollowing, this could not but much disturb you; but would you from the disturbance they make, fall to question your sincerity in the duty? truly 'tis all one whether the disturbance be in the room, or in the bosome, so the soul likes the one no more than he doth the other.

Secondly, dost thou sit contented with this company, or use all the means thou canst to get rid of them, as soon as may be? Sincerity cannot sit still, to see such doings in the soul, but as a faithful servant when thieves break into his masters house, though over-powred with their strength and multitude, that he cannot with his own hands thrust them out of doores; yet he will send out secretly for help, and raise the town upon them; prayer is the sincere souls messenger, it posts to heaven with full speed in this case, counting it self to be no other than in the belly of hell with *Jonah*, while it is yoked with such thoughts, and as glad when aid comes to rescue him out of their hands, as *Lot* was when *Abraham* recovered him from the Kings that had carried him away prisoner.

Object. But may be thou wilt say, though thou darest not deny, that thy cry is sent to heaven against them, yet thou hearest no news of the prayer, but continuest still pestered with them as before, which increaseth thy fear, that thy heart is naught, or else thy prayer would have been answered, and thou delivered from these inmates.

Answer. Paul might as well have said so, when he besought the Lord thrice, but could not have the thorn in his flesh pluckt out, 2 Cor. 12. 8. he doth not by this shew thee to be an hypocrite, but gives thee a fair advantage of proving thy self sincere, not much unlike his dealing with the *Israelites*, before whom he did not (as they expected) hastily drive out the Nations, but left them as thorns in their sides, and why? hear the reason from Gods own mouth, *Judges* 2. 22. that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. Thus God leaves these corruptions in thee, to prove whether thou wilt at last fall in, and be friends with them, or maintaine the conflict with them, and continue praying against them, by which perseverance,

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thou

Object. 4.

Answer.

thou wilt prove thy self to be indeed upright. A false heart will never do this. He is soon answered, that doth not cordially desire the thing he asks. The hypocrite, when he prays against his corruption, gets of his consciences errand, not his wills; just as a servant, that doth not like the message his Master sends him about, but dares not displease him, and therefore goes, and may be knocks at the mans door whether he is sent, yet very faintly, loth he should hear him; all that he doth, is that he may but bring a faire tale to his Master, by saying he was there; even so prays the hypocrite only to stop the mouth of his conscience with this flim, that he hath pray'd against his lust; glad he is when 'tis over, and more glad that he returns *re infecta*. Observe therefore the behaviour of thy heart in prayer, and judge thy self sincere, or not sincere by that, not by the present success it hath. God can take it kindly that thou askest, what at present he thinks better to deny than give. Thou wouldst have all thy corruptions knockt down at one blow, and thy heart in a posture to do the work of thy God without any stop, or rub from lust within, or Devil without; wouldst thou not? God highly approves of your zeal, as he did of *Dauids*, who had a minde to build him a Temple, but as he thought not fit that the house should in *Dauids* time be reared (reserving it for the peaceful reigne of *Solomon*) so neither doth he, that this thy request should be granted in this life, having reserv'd this immunity as an especial part of the Charter of the City that is above, which none but glorified Saints, who are inhabitants there, enjoy; he hath indeed taught us to pray (let thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven) but we must expect the full answer to it when we come there. But learn therefore poor soul, to take this denial as *David* did his; because God would not let him build the house in his days, he did not therefore question the love and favour of God, neither did he desist from preparing materials for it; but did what he might towards it, though he might not what he would; far be it from thee also, that thou shouldest for this either cast away thy confidence on God, or lay a side thy endeavour for God, in mortifying thy corruptions, and adding to the store thou hast at present of his graces, which (though now imperfect, and unpolisht) he will make use of in the heavenly building which he intends thee for, where.

where all the broken pieces (as I may so say) of our weak graces shall be so improved by the power and wisdom of God, that they shall make up one glorious structure of perfect holiness, more to be admired by Angels in heaven, for the rare workmanship of it, than *Solomons* Temple was on earth by men, when in its full glory.

Obj. Oh but, saith the tempted soul, I have sometimes inward checks from my own conscience that this duty I did hypocritically, and in that action there was much falseness of heart discovered it self, and if my heart condemn me, how can it be otherwise, but I must needs be an hypocrite ?

Object. 4.

Ans. I shall help to resolve this, by laying down two distinctions, and applying them to the case in hand.

Ans.

First, we must distinguish between conscience proceeding by a right rule in its judgment, and conscience proceeding by a false rule.

Secondly, between a conscience that goes by a right rule, and is also rightly inform'd how to use it; and a conscience that judgeth by a right rule, but is not rightly informed in its use. First, to apply the first.

First, then conscience proceeds by a right rule, when it grounds its charge upon the Word of God; for, being but an under-officer, it is bound up to a Law by which it must proceed; and that can be no other than what God appoints it, who gives it commission, and puts it in office; and that is the Word of God, and that only; So that we are to give credit to our consciences, commanding or forbidding, condemning or acquitting us, when it can shew its warrant from the Word of God for these; otherwise as subjects that are wronged in an inferior Court, and cannot have justice there, may appeal higher, so may and ought we from conscience to the Word of God. And you must know conscience is a faculty that is corrupted as much as any other by nature, and is very oft made use of by Satan, to deceive both good and bad, godly and ungodly. Many that know their consciences (they say) speak peace to them, will be found meerly cheated and gull'd, when the books shall be open'd; no such discharge will then be found entred in the book of the Word, as conscience hath put into their hand. And many gracious souls, who pass their dayes in a continual fear of their spiritual state,

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and were kept chain'd in the dark dungeon of a troublesome conscience, shall then be acquitted, and have their action against Satan for false imprisonment, and accusing their consciences to the disturbing their peace. And now let me ask thee poor soul, who sayest, thy conscience checks thee for an hypocrite; art thou a convicted hypocrite by the Word? doth conscience shew thee a word from Christs Law; that proves thee so? or rather doth not Satan abuse thy own fearfulness, and play upon the tenderneſſe of thy spirit, which is so deeply poſſeſt with the ſenſe of thy ſinnes, that thou art ready to believe any motion in thee, that tells any evil of thee? I am ſure it is oft ſo; the fears and checks which ſome poor ſouls have in their boſomes, are like thoſe reports that are now and then raiſed of ſome great news, by ſuch as have a minde to abuſe the countrey; A talk and murmur you ſhall have in every ones mouth of it, but go about to follow it to the Spring-head, and you can finde no ground of it, or Authour of credit that will vouch it. Thus here, a bruit there is in the tempted Chriſtians boſome, and a noiſe heard as it were continually whiſpering in his eares, *I am an hypocrite, my heart is naught*; all I do is diſſembling; but when the poor creature in earneſt ſets upon the ſearch, to finde out the buſi-neſſe, calls his ſoul to the bar, and ſalls to examine it upon thoſe interrogatories, which the Word propounds for trial of our ſincerity, he can ſaſten this charge from none of them all upon himſelf; and at laſt comes to finde it but a falſe alarm of hell, given out to put him to ſome trouble and affrightment for the preſent, though not hurt him in the end; like the Politicians lye, which though it be found falſe at laſt, yet doth them ſome ſervice the time it is believed for true. As one ſerious queſtion, ſuch as this, ſeriously put to a groſs hypocrite, is able to make him ſpeechleſs; what promiſe in all the Bible haſt thou on thy ſide for thy ſalvation? ſo it is enough to deliver the troubled ſoul from his fears of being an hyhocrite, if he would but as *David*, ask his ſoul a Scripture reaſon for his diſquietments; *Why art thou caſt down O my ſoul, and why art thou diſquieted within me?* The ſincere ſoul hath firm ground for his faith at bottom, however a little dirt is caſt by Satan over it, to make him afraid of venturing to ſet his foot on it.

Secondly, we must distinguish between a conscience rightly inform'd, and a conscience mis-inform'd. A conscience may be regular, so as to choose the right rule, but not rightly inform'd how to use this rule in his particular case, indeed, in the Saints trouble of spirit, conscience is full of Scripture sometimes, on which it grounds its verdict; but very ill interpreted; O saith the poor soul, this place is against me, *Psalms 32. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.* Here, saith he, is a description of a sincere soul, to be one in whose spirit there is no guile; but I finde much guile in me, therefore I am not the sincere one; Now this is a very weak, yea, false inference. By a spirit without guile, is not meant a person that hath not the least deceitfulness and hypocrisie remaining in his heart; this is such a one, as none since the fall (but Christ himself) was ever found walking in moral flesh. To be without sinne, and to be without guile, in this strict sence, are the same; A Prerogative here on earth peculiar to the Lord Christ, *2 Peter 2. 22. who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.* And therefore when we meet with the same phrase attributed to the Saints, as to *Levi, Malachi 2. 6. Iniquity was not found in his lips.* And to *Nathaniel, John 1. 47. Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.* we must sence it in an inferiour way, that may suite with their imperfect state here below and not (put that which onely was Christs Crown on earth, and is the glorified Saints robe in heaven, to weare (on the weak Christian while militant on earth, not only with a Devil without, but a body of sinne within him. Wipe thine eyes again (poor soul) and then, if thou readeest such places, wherein the Spirit of God speaks so highly and hyperbolically of his Saints grace, thou shalt finde he doth not assert the perfection of their grace (free from all mixture of sinne) but rather to comfort poor drooping souls, and crosse their mis-giving hearts (which from the presence of hypocrisie are ready to over-look their sincerity as none at all) he expresseth his high esteeme of their little grace, by speaking of it as if it were perfect, and their hypocrisie none at all.

O Christian, thy God would have thee know that thou dost not more over-look thy little grace for fear of the hypocrisie thou find'it mingled with it, than he doth thy great corruptions, for the deare love he beares to the little yet true grace he sees amidst them. *Abraham* loved and owned his kinsman *Lot* when a prisoner, carried away by those *Heathen Kings*; so does thy God thy grace (neere in blood to him) when sadly yoked by the enemy in thy own bosome; and for thy comfort know, when the books shall be opened, the Word, and also that of thy own conscience in the great day of Christ, Christ will be the Interpreter of both; Not the sence which thou hast in the distemper of thy troubled soul (when thou readest both with Satans glosse) put upon them, shall stand; But what Christ shall say; and to be sure he hath already declared himself so great a friend to weake grace, when on earth, by his loving converse with his disciples, and free testimony he gave to his grace in them (when God knowes they were but raw and weake Christians, both as to their knowledge and practice) that (poor soul) thou need'it not feare, he will then and there condemne, what here he commended and so dearly embraced. Yes, he that took most care for his little Lambs how they might be used gently, when he was to go from them to heaven, will not be unkind to them at his returne I warrant thee.



CHAP. XII.

Four Characters of Truth of heart or sincerity.

HAVING broke the flattering glasses wherein hypocrites use to look, till they fall in love with their own painted faces, and conceit themselves sincere; as also those which disfigure the sweet countenance and natural beauty of the sincere soul, so as to make it bring the grace of God, which shines on it, into question; I now proceed to draw a few lineaments, and lay down some undoubted Characters of this truth of heart, and godly sincerity, whereby we may have the better advantage of stating every one in his own condition.

SECT. I.

First, a sincere heart is a new heart; hypocrisie is call'd the old leaven, 1 Cor. 5. 7. purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump. Dough once soured with leaven will never lose the taste of it; Neither will corrupt nature cease to be hypocritical, till it cease to be corrupt nature; either the heart must be made hew, or it will have its old quality; there may be some art used to conceal it, and take away its unsavouriness from others for a while; as flowers and perfumes cast about a rotten carcass may do its sence; yet both the rotten carcass and the corrupt heart remain the same. They say of the Peacock, that roost him as much as you will, yet his flesh (when cold) will be raw again; truly thus let a carnal heart do what it please; force upon it self never such an high straine of seeming piety, so
that

that it appears fire hot with zeal, yet stay a little, and it will come to its old complexion, and discover it self to be but what it was, naught and false, one heart, and a new heart, both are covenant-mercies, yea, so promised, that the new is promised in order to the making of the heart one, Ezek. 11. 9. *I will give them one heart, and I will put anew spirit in you, and I will take away the stony heart, &c.* God promiseth he will give them one spirit, that is, a sincere spirit to God and man; contrary to a divided heart, *a heart and a heart, the mark of hypocrisie.* But how will he give it? he tells them, *I will give you a new spirit, and how will he do that? I will take away the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh; upon which words one very well thus glosseth, I will give you one heart, which that I may so do, I will cast it anew; and that I may do this also, I will melt and soften it; as one that having many pieces of old silver, or plate, lying by him, which he intends to put into one bowle, he first resolves to cast it anew, and to that end throws it into the fire to melt, and so at last shuts up all in one piece.* Indeed by nature mans heart is a very divided broken thing, scatter'd and parcell'd out, a piece to this creature, and a piece to that lust. One while this vanity hires him (as *Leah* did *Jacob* of *Rachel*) anon when he hath done some drudgery for that, he lets out himself to another, thus divided is man and his affections; Now, the Elect (whom God hath decreed to be vessels of honour, consecrated for his holy use, and service) he throws into the fire of his Word, that being there softened and melted, he may by his transforming Spirit cast them anew, as it were into a holy oneness; so that he who before was divided from God, and lost among the creatures, and his lusts (that shared him among them) now his heart is gathered in to God from them all; it looks with a single eye on God, and as for him in all that he doth; if therefore thou wouldest know whether thy heart be sincere, enquire whether it be thus made new. Hath God thrown thee into his furnace? did ever his Word like fire, take hold upon thee, so as to soften thy hard heart, and melt thy drossie spirit, that thou now seest that desperate hypocrisie, pride, unbelief, and the like, which before lay hid, like drossie in the metall, before the fire findes it out? and not only seest it, but seest it sever,

sever, and separate from thy soul, that thou who before didst bléssé thy self as in a good condition, now bewailest thy folly for it, heartily confessing what an unfavoury creature thou wert to God in all thou didst; the things which appear'd so gaudie and fair in thy eie, thy civil righteounesse, keeping thy Church, slubbering over a few duties in thy familie, that for them thou thoughtest heaven was as it were in mortgage to thee; dost thou lament to think how thou didst mock God with these hypocritical pageants abroad, while thy lusts were entertain'd within doors in thy bosome, there sucking the heart-blood of thy dearest affections? In a word, canst thou say that thou art not only melted into sorrow for these, but that thou findest thy heart (which was so divided and distracted betwixt lusts and creatures) now unired to fear the Name of God? Hast thou but one design, that above all thou pursuest, and that to approve thy self to God, though with the displeasing of all beside? one love, how thou mayest love Christ, and be beloved of him? if the streams of thy affections be thus (by the mighty power of God renewing thee) gather'd into this one channel, and with a sweet violence run this way, then blessed art thou of the Lord; thou art the sincere soul in his account, though much corruption be found in thee still, that is soyling thy stream, and endeavouring to stop the free course of thy soul God-wards; this may put thee to some trouble, as the mountains and rocks do the river-water running to the Sea, causing some windings and turnings in its course, which else would go the nearest way, even in a direct line to it; so thy remaining corruptions may now and then put thee out of thy way of obedience; but sincerity will (like the water) on its journey for all this, and never leave till it bring thee (though with some compasse) to thy God, whom thou hast so imprinted in thy heart, as he can never be forgot by thee. But if thou never hadst the hypocrisy of thy heart thus discovered, and made hateful to thee, nor a new principle put into thy bosome, to turn the tide of thy soul contrary to the natural fall of thy affections; only thou from the good opinion, which thou hast of thy self (because of some perry flourishes thou makest in profession), takest it for granted thou art sincere, and thy heart true. I dare pronounce thee an unclean hypocrite; the world may Saint thee possibly, but thou wilt never

(as thou art) be so in Gods account; when thou hast tricked and spruced up thy self never so finely into the fashion of a Christian, still thou wilt have but a Saints face, and an hypocrites heart. It is no matter what is the sign, though an Angel that hangs without, if the Devil and sin dwell within. New trimming upon an old garment will not make it new, only give it a new shape; and truly it is no good husbandry to bestow a great deal of cost in fining up an old suit, that will drop in a while to ratters and rags, when a little more might purchase a new one, that is lasting. And is it not better to labour to get a new heart, that all thou doest may be accepted, and thou saved, than to lose all the pains thou takest in Religion, and thy self also for want of it?

SECT. II.

2.

Secondly, a sincere heart is a plain heart, a simple heart *sine plicis*; a heart without folds; the hypocrite is of the Serpents brood, he can (as the Serpent) shrink up, or let out himself for his advantage, unwilling to expose himself much to the knowledge of others; and he has reason to do so, for he knows he hath most credit where he is least known: the hypocrite is one that *digs deep to hide his counsel*, *Esay 29. 15. their heart is deep*, *Psal. 64. 6. their meaning and intent of heart lies no body knows* how far distant from their words; a sincere heart is like a clear stream in a brook; you may see to the bottome of his plots in his words, and take the measure of his heart by his tongue. I have heard say, that diseases of the heart are seen in spots of the tongue; but the hypocrite can shew a clear tongue, and yet have a foul heart; he that made that proverb, *loquens ut se videam, speak that I may see you*, did not think of the hypocrite, who will speak that you shall not see him: The thickest clouds that he hath to wrap up his villany in, are his religious tongue and sandy profession. Wouldst thou know whether thou hast a true heart in thy bosome? look if thou hast a plain dealing heart; see them joyn'd, *2 Cor. 1. 12. Paul and the rest of the faithful messengers of Christ*, had their conversation among the *Corinthians*, in *simplicity and godly sincerity*. They had no close box in the cabinet

binet of their hearts, in which they cunningly kept any thing conceal'd from them of their designs, as the false Apostles did. Now this plain-dealing of the sincere heart appears in these three particulars.

First, a sincere heart deals plainly with it self, and that in two things chiefly,

First, in searching and ransaking its own self; this it doth to its utmost skill and power. It will not be put off with pretences, or such a mannerly excuse as *Rachel* gave *Laban*, when at the same time she sat brooding on his Idols. No, an account it will have of the soul, and that such a one, as may enable it to give a good account to God, upon whose warrant it does its office; O the fear which such a one shews, lest any lust should scape its eye, and lie hid (as *Saul* in the stuffe) or that any the least grace of God should be trodden on regardlessly by belying or denying it! When *David* found his thoughts of God (which used to recreate him, and be his most pleasing company,) occasion some trouble in his spirit, *Pf. 77. 3. I thought on God, and was troubled*; this holy man (wondering what the matter should be) do but see what a privy search he makes; he hunts backwards and forwards, what Gods former dealings had been, and communeth with his heart; and makes diligent search there, *v. 6.* never gives over till he brings it to an issue; and finding the disturber of his peace to be in himself, he is not so tender of his reputation, as to think of smothering the businesse, or smoothing it over; but attaches the thief, indites his sin, and confesseth the fact, to the justifying of God, whom before he had hard thoughts of, *v. 20. And I said, this is my infirmity.* As if he had said, Lord, now I see the *Jonas* that caused the storm in my bosome, and made me so uncomfortable in my affliction all this while; 'tis this unbelief of mine, that bowed me down to attend so to the sorrow and sense of my present affliction, that it would not suffer me to look up to former experiences; and so while I forgot them, I thought unworthily of thee; here was an honest plain-dealing soul indeed; what a kin art thou O man to holy *David*? is this thy way in searching of thy soul? dost thou do it in earnest, as if thou wert searching for a murderer hid in thy house, as willing to find out thy sin, as ever *Papist* in *Queen Maries* dayes was to find Protestants, whom to discover they

they would runne their swords and forks into beds and hay-mows, lest they should be there? Or when thou goest about this work art thou loth to look too far, lest thou shouldst see what thou wouldst willingly over-look, or afraid to stay too long, lest conscience should make an displeasing report to thee? *Tertullian* said of the Heathen persecutors, *noluerunt audire, quod auditum damnare non possint*. They would not let the Christians be heard, because they could not then easily have had the face to condemn them, their cause would have appear'd so just; the contrary here is true, the hypocrite dares not put his state upon a fair trial, because then he could not handsomely escape condemning himself. But the sincere soul is so zealous to know its true state, that when he hath done his utmost himself to find it out, and upon this privy search his conscience clears him, yet he contents not himself here, but jealous lest self-love might blind his eyes, and occasion too favourable a report from his conscience, he calls in help from heaven, and puts himself upon Gods review, *Psal.* 139. 21. *Do not I hate them that hate thee? and am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee?* ver. 22. His own conscience answers to it: *I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies*. Yet *David* not wholly satisfied with his own single testimony, calls out to God, ver. 23. *Search me O God, and know my heart; see if there be any wicked way in me*; and wise Physicians will not trust their own judgements about the state of their own health; nor sincere Christians themselves about their souls welfare; 'tis God that they attend to; his judgement alone concludes, and determines them; when they have pray'd, and open'd their case to him. (with *David*) they listen what he will say; therefore you shall find them putting themselves under the most searching Ministry, from which they never come more pleased, than when their consciences are stript naked, and their hearts exposed to their view, as the woman of *Samaria*, who commended the Sermon, and Christ that preach't it, for this unto her neighbours, that he had told her *all that ever she had done*, *Joh.* 4. 29. whereas a false heart likes not to hear of that ear; he thinks the Preacher commits a trespass, when he comes upon his ground, and comes up close to his conscience, and if he could, he would have an Action against him for it. This stuck in *Herods* stomach, that

John

John should lay his finger on his fore-place; though he fear'd him being conscious, yet he never loved him, and therefore was soon perswaded to cut off his head, which had so bold a tongue in it, that durst reprove his incestuous bed.

Secondly, the true heart shews its plain dealing with its self, as in searching, so in judging it self, when once testimony comes in clear against it, and conscience tells: Soul, in this duty thou betrayedst pride, in that affliction, frowardness, and impatience; such a one is not long before it proceeds to judgment, and this it doth with so much vehemency and severity, that it plainly appears, zeal for God (whom he hath dishonoured) makes him forget all self-pity; he lays about him in humbling and abasing himself, as the sons of Levi in executing justice on their brethren, who *knew neither brother nor sister* in that act; truly such an heroic act is this of the sincere soul judging it self; he is so transported and cloathed with a holy fury against his sin, that he is deaf to the cry of flesh and blood, which would move him to think of a more favourable sentence. *I have sinn'd* (saith David) *against the Lord*; in another place, *I have sinn'd greatly, and done very foolishly*; in a third, he as unworthy of a mans name, takes beast to himself, *so foolish was I and ignorant, as a beast before thee*. But a false heart, if conscience checks him for this or that, and he perceives by this inward murmur in his bosom, which way the cause will go, if he proceeds fairly on to put himself upon the tryal; the Court is sure to be broke up, and all put off to another hearing, which is like to be at leisure; so that as witnesses with delays and many put-offs, grow at last weary of the work, and will rather stay at home, than make their appearance to little purpose; so conscience ceaseth to give evidence where it cannot be heard, or when heard, can have no judgment against the offendour.

Secondly a true heart is plain as with its self, so with God also; several ways this might appear; take one for all; and that is in his petitions, and requests at the Throne of grace; The hypocrite in prayer juggles; he asks what he would not thank God to give him; there is a mystery of iniquity in his praying against iniquity. Now this will appear in these two particulars, whether we be plain-hearted in our requests or not.

2 Sam. 13.
2 Sam. 24.
Psal. 73. 22.

1.

First, observe whether thou beest deeply afflicted in spirit, when thy request is not answered, or regard'st not what successe it hath: suppose it be a sin thou prayest against, or some grace thou prayest for; what is thy temper all the while thy messenger stays, especially if it be long? thou prayest, and corruption abates not, grace grows not; now thy hypocrisie or sincerity will appear; if sincere, every moment will be an hour, every hour a day, a year till thou hearest some news from heaven; hope deferred will make the heart sick: doth not the sick man that sends for a Physician, think long for his coming? O he is afraid his messenger should misse of him, or that he will not come with him, or that he shall die before he bring his Physick; a thousand fears disturb him, and make him passionately wish he were there; thus the sincere soul passeth those hours with a sad heart, that it lives without a return of its request; *I am a woman* (said Hannah to Eli) *of a sorrowful spirit*, 1 Sam. 1. 15. and why so? alas she had from year to year prayed to God, and no answer was yet come: thus saith the soul, I am one of a bitter spirit, I have pray'd for a soft heart, a believing heart many a day and moneth, but 'tis not come; I am afraid I was not sincere in the business, could my request so long have hung in the clouds else? such a soul is full of fears and troubles; like a Merchant that hath a rich Ship at Sea, who cannot sleep on Land, till he sees her, or hears of her; but, if when thou hast sent up thy prayer, thou canst cast off the care and thoughts of the business, as if praying were only like childrens scribbling over pieces of paper, which when they have done, they lay aside and think no more of them: if thou canst take denials at Gods hands for such things as these, and blank no more than a cold suitor doth, when he hears not from her whom he never really loved, it breaks not thy rest, imbitters not thy joy, a false heart set thee on work. And take heed; that instead of answering thy prayer, God doth not answer the secret desire of thy heart, which should he do, thou art undone for ever.

2.

Secondly, observe whether thou usest the means to obtain that which thou prayest God to give. A false heart sits still it self, while it sets God on work; like him, that when his Cart was set in a slough, cried, *Jupiter* help, but would not put his own shoulder to the wheel; if corruptions may be mortified, and kill'd for him, as *Goliath* was for the *Israelites* (he like them, looking on,
and

and not put to strike stroke) so it is; but for any encounter with them, or putting himself to the trouble of using any means to obtain the victory, he is so eaten up with sloth and cowardize, that it is as grievous he thinks, as to sit still in slavery and bondage to them. But a sincere soul is conscientiously laborious. *Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto the Lord, Lam. 3. 41. that is, saith Bern. tremus & laboremur.* Let us pray and use the endeavour; the hypocrites tongue wags, but the sincere souls feet walk, and hands work.

Lam. 3. 41.

Thirdly, the sincere soul discovers its plainness and simplicity to men. We had our conversation *among you* (saith Paul to the *Corinthians*) in *simplicity*, and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom. The Christian is one that cannot subject his heart to his head, his conscience to his policy; he commits himself to God in well-doing, and fears not others, if he be not conscious to himself; and therefore he dares not make a hole in his conscience to keep his skin whole, but freely and openly voucheth God without dissembling his profession: while the hypocrite shifts his sails, and puts forth such colours as his policy and worldly interest adviseth; if the coast be clear, and no danger at hand, he'll appear as religious as any; but no sooner he makes discovery of any hazard it may put him to, but he racks about, and shapes another course, making no bones of juggling with God and man; he counts that his tight road, which leads to his temporal safety; but quite contrary the upright, *Prov. 16. 17. The high-way of the upright is to depart from evil.* This is the road that this true traveller jogs on in; and if he be at any time seen out of it, 'tis upon no other account, than a man that hath unwillingly lost his way, never quiet till he strike into it again.

3.

SECT. III.

3.

Thirdly, the sincere true-hearted Christian is uniform. As truth in the doctrine differs in this from its opposite, that it is one, error diverse; there is no harmony among errors, as among truths; so truth of heart, or sincerity, is known from hypocrisie by the same character. Indeed truth in the heart is but the copy and transcript of the other; they agree as the face in the glasse doth with the face in the man that looks in it, or as the image in the wax, with the sculpture in the seal, from which it is derived; therefore if truth in the Word be uniform and harmonious, then truth in the heart which is nothing but the impression of that there must also be so. A sincere Christian in the tenure of his course is like himself, *vir unus coloris*, of one colour, not like your changeable fluffs, so died, that you may by waving of them divers ways, see divers colours.

There is a three-fold uniformity in the sincere Christians obedience; he is uniform, *quoad objectum, subiectum & circumstantias obedientia*. As to the object, subject, and several circumstances that accompany his obedience.

First, as to the *Object*, the hypocrite indeed is in with one duty, and out with another; like a globous body, he toucheth the Law of God in one point, (some particular command he seems zealous for) but meets not in the rest; whereas the sincere heart lies close to the whole Law of God in his desire and endeavour. The upright mans foot is said to stand in an even place, *Psa. 26. 11.* he walks not haltingly and uncomely; as those who go in unequal wayes, which are hobbling, and up, and down; or those whose feet and legs are not even, (*as Solomon saith*) *the legs of the lame are not even*, and so cannot stand in an even place, because one is long, and the other short; the sincere mans feet are even, and legs of a length (as I may say) his care alike conscientious to the whole Will of God. The hypocrite like the *Badger*, hath one foot shorter than another; or like a foundered horse, he doth not stand as we say, right of ~~all four~~; one foot at least you shall perceive he favours, loth to put it down. The *Pharisees* pretended much zeal to the first

Table

Table, they pray'd and fasted in an extraordinary manner; but they pray'd for their prey, and when they had fasted all day, they sup at the poor widows cost, her house they mean to devour. A sad fast that ends in oppression, and only serves to get them a ravenous appetite, to swallow others estates under a pretence of devotion. The moralist, he is very punctual in his dealings with men, but very theevish in his carriage to God; though he will not wrong his neighbour of a farthing, he sticks not to rob God of greater matters; his love, fear, faith are due debt to God, but he makes no conscience of paying them. It is ordinary in Scripture to describe a Saint, a godly person by a particular duty, a single grace; sometimes his character is, *one that feareth an oath*, Eccles. 9. 2. sometimes one that loves the brethren, 1 John 3. 14. and so of the rest; and why? but because whereever one duty is conscientiously perform'd, the heart stands ready for another. As God hath enacted all his commands with the same authority, (wherefore 'tis said, *God shaketh all these words*, Exod. 20. 1. one as well as the other.) So God infuseth all grace together, and writes not one particular Law in the heart of his children, but the whole Law, which is an universal principle, enclining the soul impartially to all; so that if thou likest not all; thou art sincere in none. *Secondly*, the sincere Christian is uniform, *quoad subjectum*; the whole man (so far as renewed) moves one way; all the powers and faculties of the soul joyn forces, and have a sweet accord together; when the understanding makes discovery of a truth, then conscience improves her utmost authority on the will, commanding it in the Name of God (whose officer it is) to entertain it; the will so soon as conscience knocks, opens her self, and lets it in; the affections like dutiful hand-maids, seeing it a guest welcome to the will, (their Mistress) expresse their readiness to wait on it, as becomes them in their places. But in the hypocrite it is not so; there one faculty fights against another; never are they all found to conspire and meet in a friendly vote; when there is light in the understanding, the man knows this truth and that duty; then oft conscience is brib'd for executing its office, it doth not so much as check him for the neglect of it; truth stands as it were before the soul, and conscience will

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not so much befriend it as to knock, and rouse up the soul to let it in; if conscience be overcome to plead its cause, and shews some activity in pressing for entertainment, it is sure either to have a churlish denial, with a frown for its pains, in being so busie to bring such an unwelcome guest with it, as the froward wife doth by her husband, when he brings home with him one she doth not like, or else a fained entertainment, the more subtilly to hide the secret enmity it hath against it.

2.

Thirdly, *quoad circumstantias obedientiae*. The sincere soul is uniform as to the circumstances of his obedience and holy walking, such as are time, place, and company, and manner; he is uniform as to time, his Religion is not like a holy-day suit, put on only at set times, but come to him when you will, you shall find him clad alike, holy on the *Lords-day*, and holy on the *week-day* too, *Psa. 106. 3. Blessed are they that keep judgement, and he that doth righteousness at all times*; tis a sign it is not a mans complexion, when the colour he hath while he sits by a fire dies away soon after. There are some if you would see their goodnesse, and be acquainted with their godlinesse, you must hit the right time, or else you will find none, like some flowers that are seen but some months in the year; or like some Physicians, that they call *soot-moon* men, they that would speak with them to any purpose, must come in the morning, because commonly they are drunk in the afternoon; thus, may be in the morning, you may take the hypocrite on his knees, in a Saints posture, but when that he is over, you shall see little of God in all his course, till night brings him again of course to the like duty. The watch is naught that goes only at first winding up, and stands all the day after; and so is that heart sure, that desires not always to keep in spiritual motion. I confess there may be a great difference in the standing of two watches; one from the very watch it self, because it hath not the right make, and this will ever do so till altered; another possibly is true work, only some dust clogs the wheels, or fall hath a little barker'd it, which removed, it will go well again. And there is a great difference between the sincere soul and hypocrite in this case, the sincere soul may be interrupted in its spiritual motion, and Christian course, but it is from some temptation that at present clogs him, but he hath a new nature which inclines to a constant motion in holiness, and doth upon the removing the present

sent impediment, return to its natural exercise of godliness; but the hypocrite fails in the very constitution and frame of his spirit; he hath not a principle of grace in him to keep him moving.

Again, the sincere Christian is uniform, as to place and company: wherever he goes he carries his rule with him, which squares him: within doors amidst his nearest relations, *David's refuge* is his *Psalm 101. 2. He will walk within his house with a perfect heart*; follow him abroad, he carries his conscience with him, and doth not bid it, (as *Abraham* his servants, when ascending the Mount) to stay behind till he comes back. The *Romans* had a Law, that every one should where ever he went, wear a badge of his trade in his hat, or outward vestment, that he might be known. The sincere Christian never willingly lays aside the badge of his holy profession. No place nor company turns him out of the way that is called holy. Indeed his conscience doth not make him fore-do his prudence; He knows how to distinguish of place and place, company and company; and therefore when cast among boisterous sinners, and scornful ones, he doth not betray Religion to scorn, by throwing its pearls before such as would trample on them, and rent him; yet he is very careful, lest his prudence should put his uprightness to any hazard. *I will behave my self wisely* (saith *David* in the fore-named *Plal.*) *in a perfect way*; that is, I will shew my self as wise as I can, so I may also be upright. Truly that place and company is like the *torrid zone*, unhabitable to a gracious soul, where profanels is so hot, that sincerity cannot look out and shew it self, by seasonable counsel and reproof with safety to the Saint; and therefore they that have neither so much zeal to protest against the sins of such, nor so much care of themselves, as to withdraw from thence, where they can only receive evil, and do no good, have just cause to call their sincerity into question.

SECT. IV.

4.

Fourthly, the sincere Christian is progressive; never at his journey's end, till he gets to heaven; this keeps him alwayes in motion, advancing in his desires and endeavours forward; he is thankful for little grace, but not content with great measures of grace: *When I awake*, saith *David*, *I shall be satisfied with thy likenesse*, Psal. 17. 15. he had many a sweet entertainment at the house of God in his Ordinances: The Spirit of God was the messenger that brought him many a covered dish from Gods table, inward consolations which the world knew not of: yet *David* has not enough, 'tis heaven alone that can give him his full draught. They say the *Gauls*, when they first tasted of the wines of *Italy*, were so taken with their lusciousnesse and sweetnesse, that they could not be content to trade thither for this wine, but resolved they would conquer the Land where they grew. Thus, the sincere soul, thinks it not enough to receive a little now and then of grace, and comfort from heaven, by trading and holding commerce at a distance with God in his Ordinances here below, but projects and meditates a conquest of that holy Land, and blessed place from whence such rich commodities come, that he may drink the wine of that Kingdome in that Kingdome. This raiseth the soul to high and noble enterprizes, how it may attain to further degrees of grace every day than other, and so climb nearer and nearer heaven. He that aims at the Sky, shoots higher than he that means only to hit a tree. *I presse* (saith *Paul*) *toward the mark*, for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, Phil. 3. 13. others admir'd *Pauls* attainments (O that they had *Pauls* grace, and then they should be happy!) but he would count himself very unhappy, if he might have no more; he professeth he hath not apprehended what he runs for; the prize stands not in the mid way, but at the end of the race, and therefore he puts on with full speed, yea, makes it the trial of uprightness in all, ver. 15. *Let us therefore as many as be perfect* (that is sincere) *be thus minded*. 'Tis the hypocrite that flints himself in the things of God. A little knowledge he would

would have that may help him to discourse of Religion among the religious: and for more, he leaves it as more fitting for the preacher than himself. Some outward formalities he likes, and makes use of in profession, as attendance on publick Ordinances, and sins which would make him stink among his neighbours, he forbears; but as for pressing into more inward and nearer communion with God in Ordinances, labouring to get his heart more spiritual, the whole body of sin more and more mortified, this was never his design. Like some flighty trades-man that never durst look so high as to think of being rich; but thinks it well enough if he can but hold his Shop doors open, and keep himself out of the Jayl, though with a thousand shifting cricks.



CHAP. XXI.

A word of direction to those who upon tryal are found unsound and false-hearted.

HAVING laid down characters of the sincere heart, it will be necessary to make some improvement of them, as the report shall be that conscience makes in your bosomes, upon putting your selves to the tryal of your spiritual states by the same. Now the report that conscience makes after examination of your selves by those notes prefixed, will amount to one of these three inferences: either it will condemn thee for an hypocrite, or pronounce thee a sincere Christian; or thirdly, bring in an Ignoramus, and leave thee in doubt whether thou beest sincere or not. That I may therefore find thee, Reader, at one door, if I misse thee at another, I shall speak severally to all three.

First, to such who upon the tryal are cast; evidence comes in

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so clear and strong against them, that their conscience cannot hold, but tell them plainly, if these be the marks of sincerity, then they are hypocrites. The improvement I would make of this trial for your sakes, is to give a word of counsel what in this case you are to do, that you may become sincere.

- I. First, get thy heart deeply affected with thy present dismal state. No hope of cure, till thou beest chased into some sense and feeling of thy deplored condition. *Physick* cannot be given so long as the Patient is asleep; and it is the nature of this disease to make the soul heavy ey'd, and dispose it to a kind of slumber of conscience, by reason of the flattering thoughts the hypocrite hath of himself, from some formalities he performs above others in Religion, which fume up from his deceived heart (like so many pleasing vapours from the stomach to the head) and bind up his spiritual senses into a kind of stupidity, yea, cause many pleasing dreams to entertain him with vain hopes and false joys, which vanish as soon as he wakes and comes to himself. The Pharisees, the most notorious hypocrites of their age, how fast asleep were they in pride and carnal confidence, despising all the world in comparison of themselves, not afraid to commend themselves to God; yea, prefer themselves before others, *God I thank thee, I am not like this Publican*: as if they would tell God, they did look to find some more respect from him than others (so far beneath them) had at his hand? Therefore Christ in his dealing with this proud generation of men, useth an unusual strain of speech: his voice which to others was still and soft, is heard like thunder breaking out of the clouds when he speaks to them; how many dreadful claps have we almost together in the same Chapter fall on their heads, out of the mouth of our meek and sweet Saviour, *Mat. 23*. *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees*, no less than eight woes doth Christ discharge upon them, as so many case shot together, that by multiplying the woes, he might shew, not only the certainty of the hypocrites damnation, but precedency also; and yet how many of that rank do we read of to be awakened and converted by these rousing Sermons? Some few there were indeed that the disease might appear not incurable; but very few, that we may tremble the more of falling into it, or letting

ting it grow upon us. Peter learnt of his Master how to handle the hypocrite, who having to do with one far gone in this disease, *Simon Magus*, Acts 8. 21. he steeped his words as it were in vinegar and gall. *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God*; there he lays the weight of his charge, that he carry'd a hypocritical heart in his bosome, which was a thousand times worse than his *Simonic* fact, (though that foul enough) it was not barely that fact, but proceeding from a heart inwardly rotten and false (which God gave Peter an extraordinary spirit to discern) that prov'd him to be in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; only in this better than the damned souls in hell, they were in the fire; he in the bond of iniquity (like a sagot bound up) fit for it, but not cast in: they past hope, and he so much left as might amount to a *perhaps* if the thought of his heart might be forgiven; to give but one instance more, and that is of a whole Church, hypocritical *Laodicea*, the Spirit of God takes her up more sharply than all the rest, which though he charged with some particular miscarriages, yet finds something among them he owns and commends: But in her, because she was conceited already (as this leaven of hypocrisy naturally puffeth up) he mentions nothing that was good in her, lest it should feed that humour that did so abound already; and take away the smartness of the reproof which was the only probable means left of recovering her. All that inclines to sleep is deadly to a *Lethargick*; and all that is soothing and cockering, dangerous to hypocrites. Some say the surest way to cure a *Lethargy*, is to turn it into a *Feaver*: to be sure, the safest way to deal with the hypocrite, is to bring them from their false peace, to a deep sense of their true misery. Let this then be thy first work; aggravate thy sin, and put thy soul into mourning for it: when a person who was by the Priest (who was to judge in case of leprosie) pronounced unclean; the Leper thus convicted, *was to rend his clothes, go bare-headed, and put a covering upon his upper lip*, (all ceremonies used by mourners) and to cry *unclean, unclean*, Levit. 13. 45. Thus do thou as a true mourner, sit down and lament this plague of thy heart; cry out bitterly, *unclean, unclean*, Ezek. 15. 17. *and* not sit, by reason of thy hypocritical heart, to come near God or his Saints, but to be like the Leper, separate from both.

both; If thou hadst such a loathsome disease reigning on thee, as did pollute the very seat thou sittest on, bed thou liest in, and drop such filthinesse on every thing thou comest near, (even into the meat thou eatest, and cup thou drinkest from) that should make all abandon thy nasty company, how great would thy sorrow be, as thou didst sit desolate, and musing alone of thy doleful condition? Such a state thy hypocritie puts thee into; a plague it is, more offensive to God than such a disease could make thee to men; it runs like a filthy sore through all the duties, and goodly coverings that you can put over it, and defiles them and thee so, that God will take an offering out of the Devils hand, as soon as out of thine, while thou continuest an hypocrite; and did the Saints of God (with whom thou hast, maybe, so much credit, as to be admitted to joyne with them at present) know thee, they would make as much haste from thee, as from him on whom they should see the plague-tokens; but should not thy disease be known till thou art dead, and so thou keep thy reputation with them, yea, possibly by them be thought when thou diest a Saint; will this give thee any content in hell, that they are speaking well of thee on earth? O poor Aristotle (said one) thou art praised where thou art not, and burnt where thou art! he meant it was poor comfort to that great Heathen Philosopher, to be admired by men of learning, that have kept up his fame from generation to generation, if he all the while be miserable in the other world: So here, O poor hypocrite, that art rankt among Saints on earth, but punished among Devils in hell.

2.

Secondly, when thy heart is deeply affected with the sin and misery of thy hypocritical heart, thou must be convinced of thy insufficiency to make a cure on thy self. Hypocritie is like a fistula sore, it may seem a little matter by the small orifice it hath; but it is therefore one of the hardest among wounds to be cured, because it is so hard to find the bottome of it. O take heed thy heart doth not put a cheat upon thy self. It will be very forward to promise it will lie no more, be false and hypocritical no more; but take counsel of a wise man, who bids thee not rely on what it saith; *He is a fool that trusteth his own heart*, Prov. 28. 2. O how many die, because loth to be at pains and cost to go to a skilful Physician at first? take heed of self.

self-resolutions, and self-reformations; sin is like the *Kings-Evil*, God, not our selves, can cure it. He that will be tinkering with his own heart, and not seek out to heaven for help, will in the end find where he mends one hose, he'll make two worse; where he reforms one sin, he'll fall into the hands of many more dangerous.

Thirdly, betake thy self to Christ as the Physician, on whose skill and faithfulness thou wilt rely entirely for cure. *Si perendum, inter peritissimos*, if thou perish, resolve to perish at his door. But for thy comfort know, never any that he undertook, miscarried under his hand, nor ever refused he to undertake the cure of any that came to him on such an errand. He blamed those hypocrites; *John* 5. 40, 43. because they were ready to throw away their lives, by trusting an *Emperick*, who should come in his own name without any approbation or authority from God for the work, but would not come to him that they might have life, though he came in his Fathers Name, and had his seal and license to practice his skill on poor souls for their recovery. And he that blamed those for not coming, will not, cannot be angry with thee who comest. It is his calling, and men do not use to thrust customers out, but invite them into their shops. When Christ was on earth, he gave this reason, why he conversed so much with Publicans and sinners, and so little among the Pharisees, because there was more work for him. Men set up where they think trade will be quickest. Christ came to be a Physician to sick souls; Pharisees were so well in their own conceit, that Christ saw he should have little to do among them, and so he apply'd himself to those who were more sensible of their sickness. If thou poor soul, beest but come to thy self so far, as to groan under thy cursed hypocrisy, and directest these thy groans in a prayer to heaven for Christ's help, thou shalt have thy Physician soon with thee, never fear it. He hath not since he ascended, laid down his calling, but still follows his practice as close as ever; we find him sending his advice from heaven in that excellent receipt, *Rev.* 3. to *Laodicea*, what she should do for her recovery out of this very disease of hypocrisy. *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tryed in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white rayment that thou mayest be clothed, &c.* As if he had said,

(11)

Laodicea,

Laodicea, thou tradeſt in falſe ware, deceiving thy ſelf and others with appearances for realities, counterfeit graces for true; thy gold is drowe, thy garments rotten rags, which do not hide, but diſcover thy ſhame; come to me, and thou ſhalt have that which is for thy turn, and better cheap alſo; for though here is mention of buying, no more is meant than to come with a buyers ſpirit, valuing Chriſt and his grace ſo high, that if they were to be bought, though with all the money in thy purſe, yea, blood in thy veins, thou wouldſt have them, and not go home, and ſay thou wert hardly uſed. 'Tis the thirſty ſoul that ſhall be ſatisfied, only look thy thirſt be right and deep.

Fiſt, right, a heart thirſt, and not ſimply a conſcience thirſt. 'Tis a very different heat that cauſeth the one and the other. Hell fire may enſlame the conſcience, ſo as to make the guilty ſinner thirſt for Chriſts blood to quench the torment which the wrath of God hath kindled in his boſome. But 'tis heaven fire, and only that which begets a kindly heat in the heart, that breaks out in longings of ſoul for Chriſt and his Spirit with ſweet cooling dew of grace to ſlack and extinguiſh the fire of luſt and ſin.

Again, look it be deep. Phyſicians tell us of a thirſt which comes from the dryneſſe of the throat, and not any great inward heat of the ſtomack; and this thirſt may be quencht with a gargle in the mouth, which is ſpit out again, and goes not down. And truly there is ſomething like this in many that ſit under the preaching of the Goſpel. Some light touches are now and then found upon the ſpirits of men and women, occaſioned by ſome ſpark that falls on their affections in hearing the Word, whereby they on a ſudden expreſſe ſome deſires after Chriſt and his grace, that you would think they would in all haſte for heaven; but being ſlighty flaſhes, and weak velleities (rather than ſtrong volitions, and deep deſires,) their heart is ſoon over, and thirſt quencht with a little preſent ſweetneſſe they taſte while they are hearing a Sermon of Chriſt (which they ſpit out again as ſoon as they are gone home almoſt) as well as maybe, though they never enjoy more of him. Labour therefore for ſuch a deep ſenſe of thy own wretchedneſſe by reaſon of thy hypocriſie, and of Chriſts excellency by reaſon of that fulneſſe

of grace in him, which makes him able to cure thee of thy distemper; that as a man thoroughly athirst can be content with nothing but drink, and not a little of that neither, but a full satisfying draught whatever it costs him: So thou mayest not be brib'd with any thing besides Christ and his sanctifying grace, nor with gifts, profession or pardon it self, (if it could be sever'd from grace) no not with a little sprinkling of grace, but long for whole floods, wherewith thou mayest be fully purg'd and freed of thy cursed lust which now so sadly oppresseth thee. This frame of spirit would put thee under the promise (heavens security) that thou shalt not lose thy longing; if thou shouldst ask silver and gold, and seek any worldly enjoyment at this rate, thou might'st spend thy breath and pains in vain; God might let thee roar (like *Dives* in hell) in the midst of those flames which thy covetous lust had kindled, without affording a drop of that (to cool thy tongue) which thou so violently pantest after. But if Christ and his grace be the things thou would'st have, yea, must have, truly then thou shalt have them. *Mat. 5. 6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*



CHAP. XIV.

An Exhortation to those who upon tryal are found to be true in heart, or sincere, to wear this Belt close girt to them in the daily exercise of it, with directions for that purpose.

I Come to the second sort, such (I mean) whose consciences upon diligent enquiry, give a fair testimony for their sincerity

cerity, that their hearts are true and upright. That which I have by way of counsel to leave with them, is to gird this belt which they have about them, close in the exercise and daily practice of it. Gird this belt, I say, close to thee; that is, be very careful to walk in the daily practice and exercise of thy uprightness. Think every morning thou art not dressed till this girdle be put on. The proverb is true here, *ungirt, unblest*; thou art no company for God that day, in which thou art insincere. If *Abraham* will walk with God, he must be upright, and canst thou live a day without his company? *Rachel* paid dear for her mandrakes to part with her husband for them; a worse bargain that soul makes, that to purchase some worldly advantage, pawns its sincerity; which gone, God is sure to follow after. And as thou canst not walk with God, so not expect any blessing from God; The promises like a box of precious ointment, are kept to be broke over the head of the upright, *Micah 2.7. Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?* And sure it is ill walking in that way, where there is found no word from God to bid us good speed; some are so superstitious, that if a hare crosseth them, they will turn back, and go no further that day. But a bold man is he, that dares go on when the Word of God lies crosse his way. Where the word doth not blesse, it curseth; where it promiseth not, it threatens; A soul in its uprightness, approving its self to God, is safe, (like a traveller going about his lawful business betwixt Sun and Sun) if any harm or losse comes to such a soul, God will bear him out; the promise is on his side, by pleading it, he may recover his losse at Gods hands, who stands bound to keep him harmlesse. See to this purpose, *Psalme 84. 11.* But they are Directions, not Motives, I am in this place to give.

SECT. I.

First, therefore if thou would'st walk in the exercise of thy sincerity, *Walk in the view of God.* That of *Luther* is most true, *Omnia præcepta sunt in primo tanquam capite.* All the commands are wrapt up in the first; for (saith he) all sin is a contempt of God; and so we cannot break any other commands, but we break the first. *We think amiss of God, before we do amiss against God;* this God commended to *Abraham*, *inftar amicum*, of soveraign use to preserve his sincerity; *Walk before me, and be thou upright*, Gen. 17. 1. This kept *Moses* his girdle streight, and close to his loyns, that he was neither bribed with the treasures of *Egypt*, nor brow-beaten out of his sincerity, with the anger of so great a King, *Heb. 11. 27. for he endured, as seeing him who was invisible.* He had a greater than *Pharaoh* in his eye, and this kept him right.

First, walk (*Christian*) in the view of Gods omniscience; this is a girding consideration; say to thy soul, *cave, videt Deus*, take heed, God seeth; it is under the rose (as the common phrase is) that treason is spoken, when Subjects think they are far enough from their Kings hearing; but did such know the Prince to be under the window, or behind the hangings, their discourse would be more loyal. This made *David* so upright in his walking, *Psalms 119. 168. I have kept thy precepts; for all my wayes are before thee.* If *Alexanders* empty chair (which his Captains when they met in counsel fate before them) did awe them so, as to keep them in good order, what would it, for to set God looking on us in our eye? The *Jews* covered Christs face, and then buffeted him: So does the hypocrite; he first saith in his heart, God sees not, or at least he forgets that he sees, and then makes bold to sin against him; like that foolish bird, which runs her head among the reeds, and thinks her self safe from the fowler, as if because she did not see him; therefore he could not see her. *Te mihi abscondam, non me tibi.* Aug. *I may hide thee from my eye, but not my self from thine.* Thou mayest (poor creature) hide God by thy ignorance and atheism, so that thou shalt not see him, but thou

thou canst not so as he shall not see thee. *All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do.* O remember thou hast to do with God in all thou doest, whether thou beest in shop or closet, Church or Market; and he will have to do with thee, for he sees thee round, and can tell from whence thou comest, when (like *Gehazi* before his Master) thou entrest into his presence, and standest demurely before him in his worship, as if thou hadst been no where; then he can tell thee thy thoughts, and without any labour of pumping them out by thy confession, set them in order before thee; yea, thy thoughts that are gone from thee (like *Nebuchadnezzars* dream from him) and thou hast forgot what they were at such a time, and in such a place, forty, fifty years ago, God hath them all in the light of his countenance, as atoms are in the beams of the Sun, and he can, yea, will give thee a sight of them, that they shall walk in thy conscience to thy horrour, as *John Baptists* Ghost did in *Herods*.

Secondly, walk in the view of his providence, and care over thee; when God bids *Abraham* be upright, he strengthens his faith on him; *I am God Almighty, walk before me, and be perfect*, as if he had said, act thou for me, and I will take care for thee; when once we begin to call his care in question towards us, then will our sincerity falter in our walking before him; hypocrisy lies hid in distrust and jealousy as in its cause; if the soul dare not rely on God, it cannot be long true to God. *Abraham* was jealous of *Abimelech*, therefore he dissembled with him; thus do we with God; we doubt Gods care, and then live by our wit, and carve for our selves, up, *make us gods* (say they) *we know not what is become of Moses*. The unbelieving Jews, flat against the command of God, keep *Manna* while the morrow, *Exod.* 16. 19. and why? but because they had not faith to trust him for another meal: This is the old weapon the Devil hath ever used to beat the Christian out of his sincerity, with, *Curse Gods, and die*, said he, to *Job* by his wife. As if she had said, what? wilt yet hold the Cattle of thy sincerity for God? Captains think they may yield, when no relief comes to them; and Subjects make account, if the Prince protest not them, they are not bound to serve him. Thou hast lain thus long in an afflicted state, besieged close with sorrows on every hand, and no news to this day

day comes from heaven of any care that God takes for thee; therefore *curse God, and die*; yea, Christ had him using the same engine to draw him off from his faithfulness to his Father, when he bade him turn stones into bread. We see therefore of what importance it is to strengthen our faith on the care, and providence of God for our provision and protection; which is the cause why God hath made such abundant provision to shut all doubting, and fear of this out of the hearts of his people. The promises are so fitly placed, that as safe harbours, upon what coast soever we be sailing, (condition we are in) if any storm arise at Sea, or enemy chase us, we may put into some one or other of them, and be safe, though this one were enough, could we find no more to serve our turn, 2 Chron. 16. 9. *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in behalf of them* (or strongly to hold with them) *whose heart is perfect towards him*: God doth not set others to watch, but his own eyes keep Sentinel; *now to watch with the child*, like the own mother, there is the *immediacy of his providence*; we may say of sincere souls, what is said of Canaan, Deut. 11. 9, 10. *it is a land* (so they are a people) *the Lord himself careth for, his eyes are always on them*. Again, *his eyes run to and fro*, there is the vigilancy of his providence; no danger, no temptation finds him napping, but as a faithful watchman is ever walking up and down, so the eyes of God run to and fro; *He that keepeth Israel* (the sincere soul which is the Israelite indeed) *shall neither slumber nor sleep*, Psal. 121. 4. that is, not little nor much; nor *slumber* by day, nor *sleep* by night; two words are there used, one that signifies the short sleep used in the heat of the day, the other for the more sound sleep of the night.

Thirdly, *throughout the whole earth*, there is the *universality*, and extent of Gods care; 'tis an encompassing providence, it walks the rounds; not any one sincere soul left out the line of his care. He has the number of them to a man, and all are alike cared for. We disfigure the beautiful face of Gods providence, when we fancy him to have a cast of his eye, and care to one more than another.

Fourthly, *to shew himself strong in the behalf of them*; there is the efficacy of his care and providence; his eyes do not run to
and

and fro to espy dangers, and only tell us what they are; As the Sentinel wakes the City when any enemy comes, but cannot defend them from their fury. A child may do this, yea, the
 X *Geese* did this for *Romes Capitol*. But God watcheth not to tell us our dangers, but to save us from them; the Saints must needs be a *happy people, because a people saved by the Lord*, Deut. 33.29. God doth not only see with his eyes, but also fights with his eyes. He gave such a look to the *Egyptians*, as turn'd the Sea on them to their destruction.

SECT. II.

2.

Secondly, labour to act from love, and not fear. Slavish fear, and sincerity cannot agree; if one be in the increase, the other is in the wain alwayes. See them opposed, 2 Tim. 1. 7. *God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind*, that is, sincere; where he implies that fear is weak and impotent, easily scared from God, his truth, and service; and not so only, but unsound also; not trusting such a one with any great matter. The slave, though he works hard, (because indeed he dares no other) yet is soon drawn into a conspiracy against his Master, because he hates him while he fears him; we see this only among the *Turks*, (against whom those Christians used as absolute slaves by them in their Gallies, do, when they have advantage in fight, often purchase their own liberty, by cutting the throats of their tyrant Masters) but also in Kingdomes, where Subjects rather fear than love their Princes, how ready they are to invite another into the Throne, or welcome any that should court them; Thus fast and loose will he be with God, that is prickt on with the Swords point of his wrath, and not drawn with the cords of his love. *Israel* is an example beyond parallel for this; *When God slew them, they sought after him, nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lyed unto him with their tongue; for their heart was not right with him*, Psal. 78. 34, 35. they feared God, and loved their lusts, and therefore they betray'd his glory at every turn, into their hands; as *Herod* did *Johns* head, whom he fear'd, into her hands

hands whom he loved. And truly there is too much of this slavish fear to be found in the Saints bosomes; or else the whip should not be so often in Gods hand. We find God checking his people for this, and make their servile spirit the reason of his severity towards them. *Is Israel a servant, a home-born slave? why is he spoiled?* Jer. 2. 14. As if God had said, What is the reason that I must use thee, who art my dear Child, as courtly as if thou wert a Servant, a Slave, laying on blow after blow upon thy back with such heavy judgements? Wouldst thou know? read ver. 17. *Hast thou not procured this to thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way?* Thou mayest thank thy self for this my unusual dealing with thee. If the Child will forget his own ingenuity, and nothing but blows will work with him, then the father must deal with his Child according to his servile spirit. When God led *Israel* by the way, as a father his Child lovingly, he flung from him; and if they would not lead by love, then no wonder he makes them drive by fear. O Christian, act more by love, and thou wilt save Gods putting thee into fear with his Whip; love will keep thee close and true to him. The very Character of love is, *It seeks not her own*, 1 Cor. 13. 5. And what is it to be sincere, but when the Christian seeks Christs interest, and not his own? *Jonathan* loved *David* dearly, this made him incur his fathers wrath, trample on the hopes of a Kingdom which he had for him and his posterity, rather than be false to his friend. *Lot* delivers up his Daughters to the lust of the *Sodomites*, rather than his guests. *Samson* could not conceal that great secret from *Dulilah* whom he loved, wherein his strength lay, though it was as much as his life was worth to blab it to her. Love is the great Conqueror of the World. Thus will thy soul be enflamed with love to Christ, set all the worldly interest adrift, rather than put his Honour to the least hazard. *Abraham* did not more willingly put his sacrificing Knife to the Rams throat to save his dear *Isaacs* life, than thou wilt be to sacrifice thy life to keep thy sincerity alive. Love is compared to fire, the nature of which is, to assimilate to its self all that comes near it, or to consume them. It turns all into fire or ashes; nothing that is heterogeneous can long dwell with its own simple pure nature. Thus love to Christ will not suffer the near Neighbourhood of any thing

in its bosom, that is derogatory to Christ, either it will reduce or abandon it, be it pleasure, profit, or whatever else; *Abraham* who loved *Hagar* and *Ishmael* in their due place, when the one began to juggle with her Mistress, and the other jeer and mock at *Isaac*, he packs them both out of doors; love to Christ will not suffer thee to side with any thing against Christ, but take his part with him against any that oppose him, and so long thy sincerity is out of danger.

SECT. III.

3.

Thirdly, Meditate often on the simplicity and sincerity of Gods heart to his Saints; what more powerful consideration can be thought on to make us true to God, than the faithfulness and truth of God to us? *Absalom*, though as vile a Dissembler as liv'd, yet when *Hushai* came out to him, he suspected him, 2 *Sam.* 16. 17. And *Absalom* said to *Hushai*, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not out to thy friend?* his own Conscience told him, it was horrible baseness for him that had found *David* such a true friend, now to joyn in rebellious Arms against him; and though *Absalom* that said this, did offer greater violence to this Law of Love, yet he question'd, it seems, whether any durst be so wicked besides himself? When therefore (*Christian*) thou findest thy heart warping into any insincere practice, lay it under this consideration; and if any thing of God and his Grace be in thee, it will unbend thee, and bring thee to rights again. Ask thy Soul, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend?* Such a friend as God hath been, is, and surely will be to thee for ever? God, when his people sin, to put them to the blush, asks them; whether he gives them any cause for their unkind and undutiful carriage to him? Thus saith the Lord, *What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me?* Jer. 2. 5. So *Moses* intending to pay *Israel* home (before he goes up and dyes on *Nebo*) for all their Hypocrisy, Murmuring, and horrible Rebellions against God, all along from first setting out of *Egypt* to that day, he brings in their Charge, and draws out the several Indictments, that they were

were guilty of. Now to add the greater weight to every one, he in the fore-front of all his speech, shews what a God he is, that they have done all this against.

He makes way to the declaiming against their sins, by the proclaiming the glory of God against whom they were committed, *Deut. 32. 3. I will publish the Name of God, ascribe ye greatness to our God*; And very observable it is, what of Gods Name he publisheth, the more to aggravate their sins, and help them to conceive of their heinous nature. *Ver. 4. He is thy rock, his work is perfect; a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he.* He chooseth to instance in the truth and sincerity of Gods heart to them in all his dispensations, as that which might make them most ashamed of their doings. Now because this one consideration may be of such use to hedge in the heart, and keep it close to God in sincerity, I shall shew wherein the truth and sincerity of Gods love appears to his Saints, every one of which will furnish us with a strong argument to be sincere and upright with God.

First, The sincerity of Gods heart appears in the principle he acts from, and ends he aims at in all his dispensations. Love is the principle he constantly acts from, and their good the end he propounds; from these he never swerves: the fire of love never goes out of his heart, nor their good out of his eye: when he frowns with his brow, chides with his lips, and strikes with his hand, even then his heart burns with love, and his thoughts meditate peace to them. Famous is that place for this purpose, *Jer. 24. 5. I will acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good, I will set mine eyes on them for good; and this was one of the sharpest judgments God ever brought upon his people, and yet in this he is designing mercy, and projecting how to do them good; so in the Wilderness, when they cried out upon Moses for bringing them thither to kill them, they were more afraid than hurt; God wisht them better than they dreamed of; his intent was to humble them, that he might do them good in the latter end: So sincere is God to his people, that he gives his own glory in Hostage to them for their security; his own Robes of glory are lockt up in their prosperity and salvation; he will not, indeed he cannot, present himself in all his*

I.

Jerem. 24. 5.

magnificence and royalty, till he hath made up his intended thoughts of mercy to his people; he is pleased to prorogue the time of his appearing in all his glory to the World, till he hath actually accomplish'd their deliverance, that he and they may come forth together in their glory, on the same day, *Psal. 102. 16.* When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. The Sun is ever glorious in the most cloudy day, but it appears not so till it hath scattered the clouds that muffle it up from the sight of the lower World; God is glorious when the World sees him not; but his declarative glory then appears, when the glory of his mercy, truth and faithfulness break forth in his peoples salvation. Now what shame must this cover thy face with (*O Christian*) if thou shouldst not sincerely aim at thy Gods glory, who loves thee, yea, all his Children so dearly, as to ship his own glory and your happiness in one bottom, that he cannot now lose the one, and save the other?

2.

Secondly, The truth and sincerity of God to his people, appears in the openness and plainness of his heart to them. A friend that is close and reserv'd, deservedly comes under a cloud in the thoughts of his friend; but he who carries, as it were, a window of Chrystal in his breast, through which his friend may read what thoughts are writ in his very heart, delivers himself from the least suspicion of unfaithfulness. Truly thus open-hearted is God to his Saints. *The secret of the Lord is upon them that fear him.* He gives us in his Key, that will let us into his very heart, and acquaint us what his thoughts are; yea, were towards us, before a stone was laid in the Worlds foundation, and this is no other than his Spirit, *1 Cor. 3. one who knows the deep things of God*; for he was at the Counsel-table in Heaven, where all was transacted; this his Spirit he employed to put forth and publish in the Scripture (indicted by him) the substance of those counsels of love, which had past between the Trinity of persons for our salvation; and that nothing may be wanting for our satisfaction; he hath appointed the same holy Spirit to abide in his Saints, that as Christ in Heaven presents our desires to him, so he may interpret his mind out of his Word to us; which Word answers the heart of God, as face answers face in the Glass. There is nothing desirable in a true friend, as to this openness of heart, but God performs in a transcendent manner to his people,

if any danger hangs over their Heads, he cannot conceal it; By them (saith David) is thy servant warned, speaking of the Word of God; one Messenger or other God will send to give his Saints the Alarm, whether their danger be from sin within, or Enemies without, *Hezekiah* was in danger of inward pride, God sends a temptation to let him know what was in his heart, that he might by falling once, be kept from falling again. Satan had a project against *Peter*, Christ gives him notice of it, *Luke 22*. If any of his Children by sin diseased him, he doth not (as false friends use) dissemble the displeasure he conceives, and carry it fair outwardly with them, while he keeps a secret grudge against them inwardly; no, he tells them roundly of it, and corrects them soundly for it; but entertains no ill-will against them; and when he leads his people into an afflicted state, he loves them so, that he cannot leave them altogether in the dark, concerning the thoughts of love he hath to them in delivering them; but to comfort them in the Prison, doth open his heart before-hand to them, as we see in the greatest calamities that have befallen the Jewish Church in *Egypt* and *Babylon*, as also the Gospel-Church under Antichrist. The promises for the deliverance out of all these, were express before the sufferings came: when Christ was on Earth, how free and open was he to his Disciples, both in telling them what calamities should be-tide them, and the blessed issue of them all, when he should come again to them? and why? but to confirm them in the persuasion of the sincerity of his heart towards them, as those words import, *John 14*. If it were not so, I would have told you: As if he had said, it would not have consisted with the sincere love I bear to you, to hide anything that is fit for you to know, from you, or make them otherwise than they are: and when he doth conceal any truths from them for the present, see his candor and sincerity, opening the reason of his vailing them, to be not that he gratcht them the communication of them, but because they could not at present bear them. Now (*Christian*) improve all this to make thee more plain-hearted with God, Is he so free and open to thee, and wilt thou be reserv'd to him? Doth thy God unbosome his minde to thee, and wilt not thou pour out all thy Soul to him? Darest thou not trust him with thy secrets, that makes thee privy to his

displeasure

his counsels of love and mercy? In a word, darest thou for shame go about to harbor and hide from him any trayterous lust in thy Soul, whose love will not suffer him to conceal any danger from thee? God, who is so exact and true to the Law of friendship with his people, expects the like ingenuity from them.

3. Thirdly, The sincerity of Gods heart and affection to his people, appears in the unmoveableness of his love. As there is no shadow of turning in the being of God, so not in the love of God to his people; there is no vertical point; his love stands still like the Sun in *Gibeah*, it goes not down, or declines, but continues in its full strength, *Esay 54. 7. With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer.* Sorry man repents of his love, the hottest affection cools in his bosom; love in the creature is like fire on the Hearth, now blazing, anon blinking, and going out; but in God, like fire in the Element, that never fails. In the creature, 'tis like water in a River, that falls and riseth; but in God, like water in the Sea, that is alwayes full, and knows no ebbing or flowing. Nothing can take off his love where he hath placed it; it can neither be corrupted nor conquered; attempts are made both wayes, but in vain.

First, His love cannot be corrupted. There have been such, that have dared to tempt God, and count, yea, bribe the Holy One of *Israel*, to desert and come off from his people. Thus *Balaam* went to win God over to *Balaks* side against *Israel*; which to obtain, he spared no cost, but built Altar after Altar, and heaped Sacrifice upon Sacrifice; yea, what would they not have done to have gain'd but a word or two out of Gods mouth against his people? but he kept true to them; yea, left a brand of his displeasure upon that Nation for hiring *Balaam*, and sending him on such an Errand to God, *Deut. 32. 4.* This passage we find of God mincing his people, to continue in them a periwation of his sincere, stedfast love to them. *Micah 6. 5. O my people remember what Balak King of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, from Shittim unto Gilgal: And why should they remember this? That ye may know the righteousness of the Lord; that is, that you may know how true and faithful a God I have been to you: Sometimes he makes*

makes use of it to provoke them to be sincere to him, as he in that prov'd himself to them, *Josh. 24. 9.* He tells them how *Balak* sent *Balaam* to set God a cursing them, but, saith the Lord, *I would not hearken to him*, but made him that came to curse you, with his own lips entail a blessing on you and yours; and why is this story mention'd? see *ver. 14.* Now therefore fear the Lord; and serve him in sincerity and truth. A most natural and reasonable inference from the premises of Gods truth and faithfulness. O Christian, wouldst thou have thy love to God made incorruptible? enbalm it often in thy thoughts with the sweet spices of Gods sincere love to thee, which is immortal, and cannot see corruption. Believe Gods true to thee, and be false to him if thou darest. It is a solecism and barbarism in love, to return falseness for faithfulness.

Secondly, The love of God to his Saints cannot be conquer'd. That which puts it hardest to it, is not the power of his peoples enemies (whether men or Devils) but his peoples sins. God makes nothing of their whole power and wrath, when combined together; but truly the sins of his people, these put omnipotency it self to the tryal. We never hear God groaning under, or complaining of the power of his enemies, but often sadly of his peoples sins and unkindnesses; these load him, these break his heart, and make him cry out, as if he were at a stand in his thoughts (to use a humane expression) and found it not easie what to do, whether love them, or leave them; vote for their life or death; well, whatever expressions God useth to make his people more deeply resent their unkindnesses shewn to him, yet God is not at a loss what to do in this case; his love determines his thoughts in favour of his covenant-people, when their carriage least deserves it, *Hos. 11. 9.* The Devil thought he had enough against *Jeshuab*, when he could find some filth on his Garment to carry this in a tale, and tell God what a dirty case his Child was in; he made just account to have set God against him, but he was mistaken; for instead of provoking him to wrath, it mov'd him to pity; instead of falling out with him, he finds Christ praying for him. Now improve this in a meditation, Christian. Is the love of God so unconquerable, that thy very sins cannot break, or cut the knot of that Covenant which ties thee to him? And does it not shame thee that thou.

Zech. 3.

thou shouldst be so fast and loose with him? thou shouldst labour to have the very image of thy heavenly Fathers love more clearly stamp'd on the face of thy love to him. As nothing can conquer his love to thee, so neither let any thing prejudice thy love to him; say to thy Soul; shall not I cleave close to God, when he hides his face from me, who hath not cast me off, when I have sinfully turn'd my back on him? shall not I give testimony to his Truth and Name (though others desert the one, and reproach the other) who hath kept love burning in his heart to me, when I have been dishonouring him? What, God yet on my side, and gracious to me (after such backslidings as these) and shall I again grieve his Spirit, and put his love to shame with more undutifulness? God forbid; this were to do my utmost to make God accessary to my sinne, by making his love fuel for it.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, Beware of presumptuous sins, these give the deepest wound to uprightness, yea, are inconsistent with it, *Psal. 19. 13. Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me, then shall I be upright.* One single Act of presumption, is inconsistent with the actual exercise of uprightness; as we see in *David*, who by that one foul sin of murder, lost the present use of uprightness, and was in that particular too like one of the fools in *Israel*, and therefore stands as the only exception to the general Testimony which God gave unto his uprightness, *1 Kings 15. 5. David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the dayes of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.* That is, there was no such presumption in any other sin committed by him, and therefore they are here discounted (as to this) that they did not make such a breach on his uprightness; as this one sin did. And as one act of a sin, presumptuous, is inconsistent with actual uprightness; so habitual uprightness is very hardly consistent with habitual presumption; if one act of a presumptuous sin, and

as I may so say, one sip of this poysonous Cup, doth so sadly infect the spirits of a gracious person, and change his complexion, that he is not like himself; how deadly must it needs be to all uprightness, to drink from day to day in it? And therefore as *Daniel* purposed in his heart, that he would not defile himself with the portion of the Kings meat, so do thou daily put thy self under some such holy Bond, that thou wilt not defile thy self with any presumptuous sin; for indeed this is properly the Kings meat, I mean the Devils (that Prince of darkness) who can himself commit none but presumptuous sins, and chiefly labours to defile Souls by eating of this his Dish; say as *Austin* in another case, *Errare possum, Hæreticus esse nō*, I may erre, but I am resolv'd not to be an Heretique. I may have many failings, but by the grace of God, I'll labour that I be not a presumptuous sinner, and if thou wouldst not be in a presumptuous sin, take heed thou makest not light of less infirmities; when *Dauids* heart smote him for rending the skirt of *Saul*, he stop't, and made a happy retreat, his tender Conscience giving him a privy check for rending his skirt, would not suffer him to cut his throat, and take away his life, which was better than rayment: But at another time, when his Conscience was more heavy eyed, and did not do this friendly office to him; but let him shoot his amorous glances after *Bathsheba*, without giving him any Alarm of his danger; the good man (like one whose senses are gone, and head dizzy at the first trip upon a steep Hill) could not recover himself, but tumbled from one sin to another, till at last he fell into the deep pit of murder. When the River is frozen, a man will venture to walk, and run where he durst not set his foot, if it be yett were but melted or broke. O when the heart of a godly man himself is so hardened that he can stand on an infirmity though never so little, and his Conscience not crack under him, how far he may go, and tremble to think what sin he may fall into.

Dan. 13.

S.B.C.T.

SECT. V.

5. Fifthly, Get above the love and fear of the World. The Christians sincerity is not eclips'd without the interposition of the earth betwixt God and his Soul.

First, The love of the World, this is a fit Root for Hypocrisie to grow upon; if the heart be violently set on any thing: the World hath, and it comes to vote peremptorily for having it, I must be worth so much a year, have such Honour; and the creature begins with *Abab*, to be sick with longing after them; then the man is in great danger to take the first ill counsel that Satan or the flesh gives him for the attaining his ends, though prejudicial to his uprightness. Hunters mind not the way they go in (over Hedge and Ditch they leap) so they may have the *Hare*.

2. It is a wonder, I confess, that any Saint should have so strong a scent after the creature, that hath the savour of Christs oynments poured into his bosom. One would think the sweet perfume, which comes so hot from those beds of spices, the promises should spoil the Christians hunting game after the creature, and one scent should hinder the taking in the other; The purer sweetneses that breath from Christ and Heaven in them, should so fill the Christians senses, that the other enjoyments (being of a more gross and earthy savour) should find no pleasing resentment in his nostrils; which indeed is most true and certain so long as the Christian hath his spiritual senses open, and in exercise: But alas, as upon some cold in the Body, the Head is stop'd, and the senses bound up from doing their office; so through the Christians negligence, a spiritual distemper is easily got, whereby those senses (graces I mean) which should judge of things, are sadly obstructed, and now when the Christian is not in temper for enjoying these purer sweetneses, the Devil hath a fair advantage of starting some creature-enjoyment, and presenting it before the Christian, which the flesh soon scents and carries the poor Christian after it, till grace comes a little to its temper, and then he gives over the Chase with shame and sorrow.

Secondly,

Secondly, Get above the fear of the World. The fear of man brings a snare. A Coward will run into any Hole (though never so dishonourable) so he may save himself from what he fears; and when the Holiest are under the power of this temptation, they are too like other men; *Abraham* in a pang of fear dissembles with *Abimelech*; yea, *Peter*, when not his life, but his reputation seem'd to be in a little danger, did not *deSorođeiv*, walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, he did not foot it right, as became so holy a man to do, but took one step forward, and another back again, as if he had not liked his way; now he will eat with the *Geniſes*, and anon he withdraws; now, what made him dissemble, and his feet thus double in his going? nothing but a qualm of fear that came over his heart, as you may ſee *Gal. 2. 12.* compared with *ver. 14.* *Fearing them which were of the circumciſion, diſsembled, and drew others into a party with him.*

SECT. IVL

Sixthly, and laſtly, Keep a ſtrict eye over thy own heart in thy daily walking; Hypocriſie is a Weed with which the beſt ſoyl is ſo tainted, that it needs daily care and dreſſing to keep it under. He that rides on a ſtumbler, had need have his eye on his way, and Hand on his Bridle; ſuch is thy heart Chriſtian, yea, it oft ſtumbles in the faireſt way, when thou leaſt feareſt it; look to it therefore, and keep a ſtrict rein over it, *מכל-סוסך* above all keeping, keep thy heart, *Prov. 4. 23.* The ſervant keeps his way when he travels in his Maſters company, but when ſent of an Errand alone, then he hath his Vagaries; many a wry ſtep may be prevented, and extravagancy in thy daily walking, didſt thou walk in Company with thy ſelf, (I mean, obſerve thy ſelf and way.) In this ſenſe, moſt in the World are beſides themſelves, ſtrangers to their own walking, as much as to their own faces; every one that lives with them, knows them better than themſelves, which is a horrible ſhame. And let not ſo vain an opinion find place

wirh thee, that, because sincere, thou needst not keep so strict an eye over thy heart; as if thy heart which is gracious, could not play false with God and thee too; doth not *Solomon* brand him on the fore-head for a fool, *That trust: their own heart*? if thou beest, as thou sayest, sincere, I cannot believe self-love should so far prevail with thee; they are the ignorant and profane whose hearts are stark naught, that cry them up for good: But it is one part of the goodness of a heart made truly good by grace, to see more into, and complain more of its own naughtiness. Bring thy heart therefore often upon the review, and take its accounts solemnly; he takes the way to make his servant a Thief, that doth not ask him now and then what money he hath in his hand. I read indeed of some in good *Jehoiada's* dayes that were trusted with the money for the repair of the *Temple*, with whom they did not so much as reckon how they laid it out; *For they dealt faithfully*, 2 Kings 12. 15. but thou hadst not best to do so with thy heart, lest it set thee on score with God, and thy own Conscience more than thou wilt get wiped out in haste. Many Talents God puts into thy Hand, Health, Liberty, Sabbaths, Ordinances, communion of Saints, and the like; for the repair of thy spiritual *Temple*; the work of grace in thee; ask now thy Soul, how every one of these are laid out; may be thou wilt find some of this money spent, and the work never a whit the more forward: It stands thee in hand to look to it, for God will have an account, though thou art so favourable to thy deceitful heart to call for none.



CHAP. XV.

Counsel and Comfort to those who are Sincere, but drooping doubting Souls; who neither are condemned absolutely in their Consciences for Hypocrites, nor fully absolv'd from the suspicion of it in their own thoughts.

WE have done with the second sort of persons; Those, who upon search find their Consciences bearing witness for their uprightness.

There is a third sort remains yet to be spoken to, and they are doubting Souls, who are indeed sincere, but dare not be persuaded to think so well of themselves. They come from the trial which they were desired to put themselves upon, and bring in an *ignoramus*, we know not whether we be sincere or no. Now to these I would give these words of counsel, and the Lord give his blessing with them.

SECT. I.

Take heed Satan doth not draw you to conclude you are Hypocrites, because you are without the present evidence of your sincerity. To say so, were to offend against the generation of Gods dear Children, many of whom must (if this were a true inference from such premises) pass the same sentence upon themselves; for such precious souls there are, from
whose

whose eyes the truth of their grace, and sincerity of their hearts is at this day hid, and yet are not without either. The *Patriarchs* had their money all day bound up in their Sacks as they travelled, though they did not know this, till they came to their *Inne*, and open'd them. Thus there is a treasure of sincerity hid in many a Soul, but the time to open the Sack, and let the Soul know its Riches, is not come. Many are now in Heaven, have shot the Gulf, and are safely landed there, who were sadly tost with fears all along their Voyage about the truth of grace in them; faith unfeigned puts a Soul into the Ark Christ; but it doth not hinder, but such a one may be Sea-sick in the Ship; 'tis Christs work, not graces, to evidence it self to our Xeye so demonstratively as to enable us to own it. Besides, an Organ fitly disposed, there is required a light to irradiate the *medium*; so besides truth of grace, it is necessary there be the spirit being another light, for want of which the Soul is benighted in its thoughts, and must cry for another, and he no other than the holy Spirit to lead him into the light. This is the great Messenger which alone is able to *show a man his uprightness*; but as the eye may be a seeing eye in the dark, when it doth not see any thing; so there may be truth of grace, where there is not present sense of that truth; yea, the creature may be passionately hunting from Ordinance to Ordinance, to get that sincerity which it already hath; as sometimes you may have seen one seek very earnestly all about the House for his Hat, when at the same time he hath it on his Head; well, lay down this as a real truth in thy Soul; I may be upright, though at present I am not able to see it clearly; This, though it will not bring in a full comfort, yet it may be some support till that come; as a shore to thy weak House, though it does not mend it, yet it will underprop and keep it standing till the Master-workman comes, the *Holy Spirit*, who with one kind word to thy Soul, is able to set thee right in thy own thoughts, and make thee stand strong on the promise, the only true basis and foundation of solid comfort. Be not more cruel to thy Soul (*O Christian*) than thou wouldest to thy Friends (shall I say) yea, thy Enemies body; should one, thou didst not much love, lie sick in thy House, yea, so sick, that if you should ask him whether he be alive, he could not tell you, (his senses and speech being both at present gone) would you pre-

presently lay him out, and Coffin him up for the Grave, because you cannot have it from his own mouth, that he is alive? Surely nor. O how unreasonable and bloody then is Satan, who would presently have thee put thy self into the pit-hole of despair, because thy grace is not so strong as to speak for it self at present?

SECT. II.

Let me send thee back upon a *melius inquirendum*; look once again more narrowly, whether Satan, that *Joab*, hath not the great hand in these questions and scruples started in thy bottom about thy sincerity, meerly as his last design upon thee, that he may amuse and distract thee with false fears, when thou wilt not be flatter'd with false hopes? The time was, thou wert really worse, and then by his means thou thoughtst thy self better than thou wert. And now, since thou hast chain'd thy way, disown'd thy former *confidence*, been acquainted with Christ, and got some savour of his holy wayes in thy spirit, so as to make thee strongly breath after them, thou art affrighted with many apparitions of fears in thy sad thoughts, if not charging thee for a Hypocrite, yet calling in question the truth of thy heart. 'Tis worth (I say) the enquiring, whether it be not the same hand again, the Devil, though knocking at another Door; no Player hath so many several Dresses to come in upon the Stage, as the Devil hath forms of temptation, and this is a Suit which he very ordinarily hath been known to wear; if it were thy case only, thou mightst have more suspicion, lest these fears should be the just rebukes of thine own false heart; but when thou findest many of thy fellow-brethren (whose sincerity thou dar'st not doubt, though thou savest not so much charity for thy self) their complaints so meet with thine, that no Key (though made on purpose) can more fit all the Wards of a Lock, than their condition doth thine; this I say may well make thee set about another search to find whether he be not come forth a lying spirit, to abuse thy tender spirit with such News, as he knows worse cannot come to thy ears, that thou dost

doſt not love Jeſus Chriſt as thou pretendſt; and deceiveſt but thy ſelf to think otherwiſe: Thus this ſoul ſpirit (like a brazen-fac'd Whore that layes her Child at an honeſt perſons door) doth impudently charge many with that which they are little guilty of, knowing that ſo much will likely ſtick of his bold accusation, to the poor Chriſtians ſpirit, as ſhall keep the door open to let in another temptation which he much deſires to convey into his boſom by the favour, and under the ſhadow of this, and it is ordinarily this; to ſcare the Chriſtian from duty, and knock off the Wheels of his Chariot, which uſed ſo often to carry him into the preſence of God in his Ordinances, meerly upon a ſuſpicion that he is not ſincere in them; and better ſtay at home without hearing, or joining with Gods people in any other duty, than go up and ſhew the naughtineſs of thy heart, ſaith the Devil. Had the Serpent a ſmoother ſkin, and a fairer tale when he made *Eve* put forth her hand to the forbidden fruit, then he comes with in this temptation, to perſwade the poor Chriſtian not to touch, or taſte of that fruit which God hath commanded to be eaten; Ordinances I mean to be enjoyed by thee? yet (*Chriſtian*) thou haſt reaſon (if I miſtake not) to bleſs God, if he ſuffers thy Enemy ſo far to open his mind, by which thou mayeſt have ſome light to diſcover the wickedneſs of his deſign, in the other temptation of queſtioning thy ſincerity. Doſt thou not now perceive poor Soul, what made the loud cry of thy Hypocriſie in thy fears? the Devil did not like to ſee thee ſo baſe with Ordinances; nor thy acquaintance to grow ſo faſt with God in them; and he knew no way but this to knock thee off. Bite at his other baits thou wouldſt not; ſin, though never ſo well cook't and garniſh't, is not a diſh for thy tooth (he fees) and therefore either he muſt aſfright thee from theſe by troubling thy imagination with fears of thy Hypocriſie in them, or elſe he may throw his Cap at thee, and give thee for one got out of his reach; doſt thou think poor Soul, that if thy heart were ſo falſe and hypocritical in thy duties, that he would make all this buſle about them? He doth not uſe to miſplace his batteries thus, to mount them, where there is no Enemy to offend him, thy hypocritical prayers and hearing would hurt him no more, than if none at all, Neither doth he uſe to be ſo kind, as to tell Hypocrites of the falſe.

falseness of their hearts, this is the chain with which he hath them by the foot, and 'tis his great care to hide it from them, lest the rattling of it in their conscience, awaken them to some endeavour to knock it off, and so they make an escape out of his prison. Be therefore of good comfort (poor soul) if thy conscience brings not Scripture proof to condemn thee for an hypocrite; fear not the Devils charge; he shall not be on the Bench when thou comest to be tried for thy life; nor his testimony of any value at that day; why then should his tongue be any slander to thee now.

S E C T. III. *made the object of his*
Neglect no means for the getting thy truth of heart and sin-
cerity evidenced to thee; it is to be had. This is the *white stone*
with the new name in it, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth
it, promised, *Rev. 2. 17.* And I hope thou dost not think
this to be such an *ens rationis*, an imaginary thing, as the *Philo-
sophers stone* is, which none could ever say to this day, that he
had it in his hand. Holy *Paul* he had this white stone sparkling
in his conscience more gloriously than all the precious stones
in *Abraams* breast-plate; *2 Cor. 1. 12.* Our rejoicing is this, the
testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we
have had our conversation in the world. And *Job* (sure) was
not without it, when he durst with such a confidence appeal to the
thoughts that God himself had of him; even then when God
was ransacking and searching every corner of his heart by his
heavy hand, *Job 10. 7.* Thou knowest, that I am not wicked;
mark, he doth not deny he had sin in him, that you have again and
again confessed by him; but he was not wicked, i. e. a rotten-
hearted hypocrite; this he will stand to; that God himself will
not say so of him; though (for his trial) the Lord gives way
to have him search & stop the Devils mouth, and shame him,
who was not afraid to lay suspicion of this spiritual felony to his
charge.

Object. But may he thou wilt say, that were Saints of the high-
est form, and though They might come to see their sincerity,

(Z)

and

and have this *white stone* in their bosomes; yet such Jewels cannot be expected to be worne by ordinary Christians.

Ans.

Ans. For answer to this, consider that the weakest Christian in Gods family hath the same witnesse in him that those had, *1 John 5. 10.* He that believeth on the Sonne of God hath the witnesse in him. Mark, 'tis indefinite, every one that believeth; not this eminent Christian, or that, but every one. The witnesse, the same Christ and Spirit dwell in thy heart, that do in the highest Saint on earth; the same blood thou hast to sprinkle, and the same water to wash thee; these can, and will (when the Lord pleases) testifie as much for thy grace and sincerity as it doth for theirs. Only as witnesses that are in a Court, stay till the Judge call them forth; then, and not till then, do they give their testimony; so do these, and God may, and doth use his liberty, when he will do this; as on the contrary, every wicked, impenitent sinner carries a witnesse in his own bosome that will condemn him; but this doth not alwayes speak, and presently make report of the sad newes it hath to tell the sinner, that is, when God calls a Court, and keeps his private Sessions in the sinners soul, which is at his pleasure to appoint the time. Only means must not be neglected, of which I shall propose a few.

I.

I. Reach forth Christian (for such I must call thee, whether thou wilt own the name or no) to further degrees of grace. The more the child grows up, the more it comes to its right complexion, and so doth grace. There is so much slavish fear, selfishnesse, with other imperfections at present (like so much scurf) on the face of this new born babe of grace, that they do hide its true favour, which by degrees will wear off as it grows up; yea, the spiritual reason of a Christian ripens, as the whole body of grace grows, whereby he is more capable, by reflecting on his own actions, to judge of the objections Satan makes against his sinceritie, so that if you would not be alwayes tossed to and fro with your own fluctuating thoughts, whether sincere or not; be not alwayes children in grace, but grow up to higher stature, and thou wilt grow above many of thy fears; for, by the same light that thou findest the growth of thy grace thou mayest see the truth of it also. Though it be hard in the

the *crepusculum*, or first break of day, to know whether it be day-light or night-light that shines; yet when you see the light evidently grow and unfold it self, you by that know it to be day. Paint doth not grow on the face fairer than it was, nor do the armes of a child in a picture get strength by standing there moneth and years; does thy love, hope, humility, godly sorrow grow more and more (poor soul) and yet question what it is, whether true grace or not? this is as marvellous a thing, that thou shouldst not know what thy grace is, and whence, as it was that the *Jewes* should not know who Christ was, when he had made a man borne blinde see so clearlie, *John 9.*

2. Readily imbrace any call that God sends thee by his providence for giving a proof and experiment of thy sinceritie. There are some few advantages that God gives, which if embraced and improv'd, a man may come to know more his own heart, and the grace of God therein, than in all his life besides. Now these advantages do lie wrapt up in those seasons, wherein God more eminently calls us forth to denie our selves for his sake. Be but ready to entertain, and faithful to obey that heavenlie call, and thou wilt know much of thy heart. Partly, because grace in such acts comes forth with such glorie, that (as the Sunne when it shines in a clear day) it exposeth it self more visibly to the eye of the creature, as also because God chooseth such seasons as these for to give his testimonie to the truth of his childrens grace in; when they are most eminentlie exercising of it in this way. When does the master speak kindly to his servant, and commend him, but when he takes him most diligent in it? then he saith, *Well done good and faithful servant.* May be sometime or other, God is calling thee to such an act of self-denial, wherein (if thou wilt answer Gods call) thou must trample upon some dear enjoyment or other, as credit, estate, may be a sweet child, a dear wife, yea, may be thou canst not do the work God calls thee to, but with hazard to them all, these and more too. Well friend, be not sick to think of thy great freight, or disquieted at the sight of his providence, that now stands at thy door: didst thou know what errand it comes about, thou wouldst invire it in, and make it as welcome as *Abraham* did the *three Angels*, whom he feasted in his Tent so freele.

freely. He tell thee what God sends it for; and that is, to bring thee to a sight of thy sincerity, and acquaint thee with that grace of God in thee, whose face thou hast so long desired to see. This providence brings thee a chariot (to allude to *Josephs* waggons sent for old *Jacob*) wherein thou mayest be carried to see that grace alive, whose funeral thou hast so long kept in thy mournful soul, and does not thy spirit revive at the thought of any means whereby thou mayest obtain this? *Abraham*, he was call'd to offer up his son, and went about it in earnest; such a piece of self-denial God could not let passe without some mark of honour; and what is it he gives him, but his testimony to his uprightness? *Gen. 22. 12.* Lay not thy hand upon the lad, for now I know thou fearest me, seeing thou hast not withheld thy sonne, thy only sonne, from me. Why? God knew this before; yes, but he speaks it that *Abraham* may hear, and take it from Gods mouth that he was sincere. May be thou art called to deny thy own education and principles suckt in by it; thy own company; crosse the judgment of those thou highly esteamest; yea, thy own wisdom and reason to entertain a truth; or take up a practice meerly upon the account of the Word; which if thou canst do, and that without affectation of singularity, or an humour of pride blowing thee that way, 'tis an act of deep self-denial, and goes most crosse to the most ingenuous natures, who are afraid of drawing eyes after them, by leaving their company to walk in a path alone; yea very loth to oppose their judgment to others, more for number and parts than their own; in a word, who love peace so dearly, that they can be willing to pay any thing but a sin to purchase it; in these it must needs be great self-denial, and therefore such have the greater ground to expect Gods evidencing their sincerity to them. He did it to *Nathaniel*, who had all these bars to keep him from coming to Christ, and believing on him; yet he did both, and Christ welcomes him with a high and loud testimony to his uprightness; Behold an *Israelite* indeed, in whom there is no guile, *Joh. 1. 47.* May be again; The thing God would have thee deny thy self in, is thy wrath and revenge, which to give thee a fair occasion to do with the greater demonstration of thy sincerity, he puts thy enemy into thy power, and lays him bound as it were under thy hand; yea, so orders it in his providence, that thou mayest have

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thy will on him with little noise, or if it be known, yet the notorious wrongs he hath done thee, and some circumstances in the providence that hath brought him into thy hand, concur to give thee an advantage of putting so handsome a colour upon the businesse, as shall apologize for thee in the thoughts of those that hear of it, making them especially (who look not narrowly into the matter) rather observe the justice of God on thy enemies judgement befallen him, than thy injustice, and sin, who wert the instrument to execute it. Now, when the way lies smooth and fair for thee to walk in, and thy own corruption calls thee forth, yea useth Gods Name in the matter, to make thee more confident, saying to thee, as they to David, 1 Sam. 24. *Behold the day is come wherein God hath delivered thy enemy into thy hand, that thou mayest do to him as seemeth good in thine eyes*: Now, if thou canst with-stand the temptation, and instead of avenging thy self upon the person, thy enemy, revenge thy self on thy revenge (thy greater enemy of the two) by paying good into thy adversaries bosome for the evil he hath done thee; and when thou hast done this, canst scape another enemy in thy return (I mean pride) so as to come out of the field an humble conquerour, and consecrate the memorial of this victory, not to thy own, but praise of Gods Name (as Goliaths sword, which was not kept by David at his own home (to shew what he had done, but in the tabernacle behind the Ephod, as a memorial of what God had done by it in Davids hand) thou hast done that which speaks thee sincere, yes, high graduate in this grace, and God will sooner or later let thee know so. Davids famous sounds not louder for his victories got in the open field, over his slain enemies, than it doth for that he got in the cave (though an obscure hole) over his own revenge, in sparing the life of Saul, (in which you have the case in hand every way fitted.) By the renown of his bloody battels, he got a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth, 2 Sam. 7. 9. But by this noble act of self-denial, he got a name, great, like unto the name of those that are famed for their holinesse in the Scripture, and rather than David shall not have the commendation of this piece of his self-denial, God will send it to him in the mouth of his very enemy, who cannot hold (though by it he proclaimes his own shame and wickednesse) but he must justify him as a holy righteous man, 1 Sam. 24. 17. And he (that

1 Sam. 21:9.

is *Saul*) said unto David, thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

3.

3. Continue thou to wait upon God in all the wayes of his Ordinances, every one in their season; whenever thou comest to get the comfortable sight of thy sincerity, it is the Spirit of God that must befriend thee in it, or else, like *Hagar*, thou mayest sit by the Well and not find it; thou mayest round thy field again and again, but not find the treasure hid in it. It is the Spirit of God by which we know the things that are freely given us of God, 1 Cor. 2. 12. Now the Spirit sits in the Ordinances (as a Minister of state in his office) whether we must resort, if we will have the truth of our graces (that are our evidences for heaven) sealed to our consciences. Thither go therefore, yea, there wait; for thou knowest not (as the *Wise man* saith of sowing seed, *Eccles.* 11. 6.) whether thy waiting on this or that, now or then, shall prosper and be successful to thee for this end. It is enough to confirm, yea, quiet and comfort thee in thy attendance, that thou art at the right door, and though thou knockest long, and hearest no news of his coming, yet thou canst not stay so long (like *Eglons servants*) that thou need'st be ashamed. They indeed waited on a dead man, and might have stood long enough before he had heard them, but thou on a living God, that hears every knock thou givest at heaven-gate with thy prayers and tears, yea, a loving God, that all this while he acts the part of a stranger (like *Joseph* to his brethren), yet is so big with mercy, that he will at last fall on thy neck and ease his heart, by owning of thee and his grace in thee. Lift up thy head then poor drooping soul, and go with expectation of the thing; but remember thou set'st not God the time: The Sunne riseth at its own hour, whatever time we set it. And when God shall meet thee in an Ordinance (as sometimes no doubt, Christian, thou find'st a heavenly light irradiating, and influence quickning thy soul while hearing the Word, or may be on thy knees wrestling with God) this is a sweet advantage and season thou should'st improve for the satisfying thy soul; as when the Sunne breaks out, then we run to the Dial to know how the day goes, or when (as we are sitting in the dark) one brings a candle into the room, then we bestir our selves

Judg. 3. 25.

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to look for the thing we misse, and soon find what we in vain groped for in the dark; so mayest thou poor soul (as many of thy dear brethren and sisters before thee have done) know more of thy spiritual state in a few moments at such a time, than in many a day when God with-draws; carefullie therefore watch for such seasons and improve them; but if God will hide thy treasure from thy sight, comfort thy self with this, God knows thy uprightnesse though wrapt up from thine own eie; say as David, *Psal. 142. 2. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path.* And God will do with thee, not by the false accusations thou bringest in against thy self (as it is to be feared some have suffered at mens hands) but by the testimony which his all-seeing eye can give to thy grace.



CHAP. XVI.

Wherein the second reason of the Metaphor is open'd; why sincerity is set out by the souldiers Belt, viz. from the establishing and strengthening nature of this grace, particularly, of a preserving strength it hath; with some special seasons wherein the Hypocrite falls off.

HAVING dispatcht the first reason why sincerity is compared to the souldiers girdle or belt, and discoursed of this grace under that notion; We proceed to the second ground or reason of the *Metaphor*, taken from the other use of the souldiers girdle, which is to strengthen his loyns, and fasten his armour

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(over which it goes) close to him; whereby he is more able to march, and strong to fight. Girding in Scripture-phrase imports strength, *Psal.* 18. 39. *Thou hast girded me with strength unto battle*, *Job* 12. 21. *He weakeneth the strength of the mighty*; in the Hebrew it is, *he looseth their Girdle*; to which use of the girdle, sincerity doth bear a fit analogy. It is a grace that establisheth and strengthens the Christian in his whole course; as on the contrary, hypocrisy weakens and unsettles the heart; *a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways*. As it is in bodies, so in souls. Earthly bodies, because mixt, are corruptible; whereas the heavenly bodies, being simple and unmixt, they are not subject to corruption: so much a soul hath of heavens purity and incorruptibleness, as it hath of sincerity. *Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*, *ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ*, with incorruption, *Ephes.* 6. 24. The strength of every grace lies in the sincerity of it; so that without any more ado, the point which offers it self to our consideration, from this second notion of the girdle, is this;

Note.

Note. That sincerity doth not only cover all our other infirmities, but is excellent, yea necessary to establish the soul in, and strengthen it for its whole Christian warfare. *The integrity of the upright shall guide them, but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them*, *Prov.* 11. 3. The hypocrite falls shamefully, and comes to naught with all his shifts and stratagems to save himself; whereas sincerity carries the soul safe, that dares follow its conduct above all dangers, though in the midst of them. But to open the point, There is a threefold strength sincerity brings with it, which the false hypocritical heart wants: 1. A preserving strength. 2. A recovering strength. 3. A comforting strength.

I.

First, sincerity hath a preserving strength to keep the soul from the defilements of sinne: when temptation comes on furiously, and chargeth the soul home, a false heart is put to the run, it cannot possibly stand; we are told of *Israels* hypocrisy, *Psal.* 78. 8. *they were a generation that set not their heart aright*, and what follows? *whose spirit was not steadfast with God*; stones that are not set right on the foundation, cannot stand strong or long: you may see more of this bitter fruit growing on the hypocrites branches in the same *Psal.* 2. 56, 57.

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*They turned back, and dealt unfaithfully; they were turned aside like a deceitful bow; when the bow is unbent, the rift it hath may be undiscern'd, but go to use it by drawing the arrow to the head, and it flies a piece; thus doth a false heart when put to the trial. As the Ape in the fable, dress'd like a man, when nuts are thrown before her, cannot then dissemble her nature any longer, but shews her self an Ape indeed; a false heart bewrays it self before 'tis aware, when a fair occasion is presented for its lust; whereas sinceritie keeps the soul pure in the face of temptation. Prov. 10, 9. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely; that is, he treads strong on the ground, like one whose feet are sound, though stones lie in his way, he goes over them safely; but he that perverteth his way shall be known, like one that hath some corn or other ail about his feet, though in green smooth way he may make a shift to go; yet when he meets with hobling stonie way, he presently comes down, and falters. Now that this preserving strength, which sinceritie girds the soul with, may better appear, it will be requisite to instance in some of those seasons wherein sinceritie keeps the soul from the power of temptation; as on the contrary, when hypocritie cowardly and tamely yields the soul up into its hands.**

First, a false heart usually starts aside, and yields to sin, when it can hide it self in a crowd, and have store of company, under which it may shrowd it self. The hypocrite lets his Watch, not by the Sun, (the Word I mean) but by the Town-clock; what most do, that he'll be easily perswaded to do; *vox populi* is his *vox Dei*: therefore you seldom have him swim against the tide of corrupt times; light things are carried by the Stream, and light spirits by the multitude. But the sincere Christian is massie and weighty, he'll sooner sink to the bottome, and yield to the fury of a multitude by suffering from them, than float after their example in swimming with them. The hypocrite hath no inward principle to ad him, and therefore like the dead fish, must drive with the current; But sinceritie being a principle of divine life, directs the soul to its way, and improves it to walk in it, without the help of company to lean on, yea, against any opposition it meets. *Joshua* spake what was in his heart, when ten or twelve that were sent with him, per-

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1 Kings 22.

ceiving on which side the wind lay, accommodated themselves to the humour of the people, *Numb. 22. 7.* The false *Prophets* pleasing words, with which they clawed *Ahab's* proud humour, could by no means be brought to fit good *Micah's* mouth, though he should make himself very ridiculous by choosing to stand alone; rather than fall in with so goodly a company, *four hundred Prophets*, who were all agreed of their verdict.

2.

Secondly, a false heart yields, when sin comes with a bribe in its hand; none but Christ, and such as know the truth, as it is in Jesus, can scorn the Devils offer *omnia haec dabo, all these will I give to thee.* The hypocrite, let him be got pinnacle high in his profession, yet will make haste down to his prey, if it lies fair before him; one that carries not his reward in his bosome, that counts it not portion enough to have God and enjoy him, may be bought and sold by any huckster, to betray his soul, God, and all. The hypocrite when he seems most devout, waits but for a better market, and then he'll play the Merchant with his profession; there is no more difference betwixt an hypocrite and an Apostate, than betwixt a green Apple and a ripe one, come awhile hence, and you will see him fall rotten-ripe from his profession. Judas a close hypocrite, how soon an open Traitor? And as fruit ripens sooner or later, as the heat of the year proves, so doth hypocrisy, as the temptation is strong or weak; some hypocrites go longer before they are discovered, than others; because they meet not with such powerful temptations to draw out their corruptions. It is observ'd, that the fruits of the earth ripen more in a week, when the Sun is in conjunction with the dog Star, than in a moneth before; when the hypocrite hath a door open'd by which he may enter into possession of that worldly prize he hath been projecting to obtain, now his lust within, and the occasion without are in conjunction, and his day hastens wherein he will fall. The hook is baited, and he cannot but nibble at it. Now sincerity preserves the soul in this hour of temptation. David prays, *Psal. 26. 9.* that God would not gather his soul with sinners, whose right hand is full of bribes; such as for advantage, would be bribed to him, to which wicked gang he opposeth himself, *ver. 11. but as for me, I will walk in my integrity;* where he tells us, what kept him from

from being corrupted and enticed, as they were from God, it was his integrity; a soul walking in its integrity will take bribes neither from men, nor sin it self, and therefore he saith, *v. 12. his feet stand in an even place*, or as some read it, *my feet stand in righteousness*.

Thirdly, the hypocrite yields to the temptation, when he may sin without being control'd by man, which falls out in a double case. First, when he may embrace his lust in a secret corner, where the eye of man is not privy to it. Secondly, when the greatness of his place and power lifts him above the stroke of justice from mans hand; in both these he discovers his baseness, but sincerity preserves the soul in both.

First, see how the hypocrite behaves himself, when he thinks he is safe from mans sight. *Anania's and Saphira's* care was to blind mans eye, by laying some of their estates at the *Apostles* feet, and having made sure of this (as they thought) by drawing this curtaine of their seeming zeal between it and them, they pocket up the rest without trembling at, or thinking of Gods revenging eye looking on them all the while; and boldly, when they have done this, present themselves to *God*, as if they were as good Saints as any in the company. The hypocrite stands more of the saving of his credit in this world, than the saving of his soul in the other; and therefore when he can ensure that, he'll not stick to venture the putting of the other to the hazard, which shews he is either a flat Atheist, and doth not believe there is another world to save or damn his soul in; or on purpose stands aloof off the thoughts of it, knowing it is such a melancholy subject, and inconsistent with the way he is in, that he dares not suffer his own conscience to tell him what it thinks of it; and so it comes to passe, that it hath no power to awe, and sway him, because it cannot be heard to speak for it self. Now sincerity preserves the soul in this case; it was not enough that *Joseph* his Master was abroad, so long as his God was present. *How can I do this great wickedness, and shine against God?* Gen. 39. 8. Mark, not against his Master, but against God; sincerity makes faithful to man, but for more than mans sake; *Joseph* serv'd his Master with eye-service; he had God in his eye; when *Pharaoh* had, not him in his; happy are those Masters that have any will serve them with this eye-service of sincerity.

2.

Secondly, the hypocrite if he cannot get out of mans sight, yet may he but stand out of the reach of his arm and power, it is as well for his turn, and doth often discover him. How unworthily and cruellie dealt *Laban* with *Jacob*, cheating him in his wife, oppressing him in his wages, by changing it ten times; alas, he knew *Jacob* was a poor shuttle creature, in a strange place, unable to contest with him, a great man in his Countrie. Some Princes, who before they have come to their power and greatness, have seem'd humble and courteous, kind and merciful, just and upright; as soon as they have leapt into the Saddle, got the reins of Government into their hand, and begun to know what their power was, have even rid their Subjects off their legs with oppression and crueltie, without all mercie to their estates, liberties and lives; such instances the History of the world doth sadly abound with; even *Nero* himself, that plaid the part of a Devil at last, began so; that in the *Roman* hopes he was hugg'd for a *State-Saint*; set but hypocrisie upon the Stage of power and greatness, and it will not be long before its mask falls off. The Prophet meant thus much, when he made only this reply to *Hazael* seeming abhorrence of what he had foretold concerning him, *2 Kings 8. 13. The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be King over Syria*, as if he had said, *Hazael*, thou never yet didst sit in a Kings Chair, and knowest not what a discovery that will make of thy deceitful heart. Mark from whence *Rehoboams* revolt from God is dated, *2 Chron. 12. 1. It came to passe when Rehoboams had established the Kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the Law of the Lord*. *Policie* bade him conceal his intentions, while he had settled himself in his Throne, lest he should have hazarded his Crown; but that set on fire, and his party made strong, now all breaks out; like a false Captain who victuals his Castle, and furnisheth it with all kind of provision and ammunition; and then, and not till then, declares himself a Traitor, when he thinks he is able to defend his treason. But here also sinceritie preserves the gracious soul; two famous instances we have for this, one in *Joseph*, who had his unnatural brethren; that would once have taken away his life; yea, who did that which might have proved worse, for all that they knew, (barbarously sell him as a slave into a strange land) these he had strangely brought into his hands, while

while he was in all his honour and power in *Egypt*; and now when he might have paid them in their own coyn, without any fear or controule from man, behold this holy man is lift above all thoughts of revenge, he pays their cruelty in his own tears, not in their blood; he weeps over them for joy to see them, that once had no joy till they had rid their hands of him; yea, when their own guilt made them afraid of his presence, measuring him by their own revengeful hearts, how soon doth he deliver them from all fears of any evil intended by him against them? yea, he will not allow them to darken the joy, which that day had with them brought to him, so much as by expressing their own grief before him, for their old cruelty to him; so perfect a conquest had he got of all revenge, *Gen. 45. 5.* And what preserv'd him in his hour of great temptation? he told them, *Gen. 42. 18.* *This do and live, for I fear God;* as if he had said, though you be here my prisoners at my will and mercy, for all that you can do to resist, yet I have that which binds my hands and heart too, from doing or thinking you evil. *I fear God.* This was his preservative, he sincerely fear'd God. The other instance is *Nehemiah*, Governour of that colony of *Jews*, which under the favour of the *Persian* Princes were again planting their native Country; by his place he had an advantage of oppressing his brethren, if he durst have been so wicked, and from those that had before him been honour'd with that office, he had examples of such as could not only swallow the common allowance of the Governour, without rising in their consciences (which shew'd a digestion strong enough, considering the peeled state of the *Jews* at that time) but could when themselves had suckt the milk, let their cruel servants suck the blood of this poor people also by illegal exactions; so that *Nehemiah* coming after such oppressours, if he had taken his allowance, and but eased them of the other burdens which they groan'd under, no doubt he might have past for merciful in their thoughts; but he durst not go so far. A man may possibly be an oppressor in exacting his own. *Nehemiah* knew they were not in case to pay, and therefore he durst not require it. But as one who comes after a bad husband that hath driven his land, and suckt out the heart of it, casts it up fallow for a time till it recovers its lost strength, so did *Nehemiah* spare this oppressed people; and what

what, I pray, was it preserv'd him from doing as the rest had done? See *Nehem. 5. 15.* But I did not so, because of the fear of the Lord. The man was honest, his heart toucht with a sincere fear of God, and this kept him right.



CHAP. XVII.

Of a recovering strength that sincerity hath, and whence.

2.

SECondly, sincerity hath a recovering strength with it; when it doth not privilege from failing, yet it helps up again, whereas the hypocrite lies where he falls, and perisheth where he lies; who therefore is said to fall into mischief, *Prov. 24. 16.* The sincere soul falls as a Traveller may do, by stumbling at some stone in his path, but gets up, and goes on his way with more care and speed; the other falls, as a man from the top of a Mast, that is ingulphed, past all recovering in the devouring Sea. He falls as *Haman* did before *Mordecai*, when he begins, he stays not, but falls till he can fall no lower. This we see in *Saul*, whose heart was never right; when once his naughty heart discovered it self, he tumbled down the hill apace, and stop't nor, but from one sinne went to a worse; and in a few years you see how far he was got from his first stage, where he first took his leave of God. He that should have told *Saul*, when he betrayed his distrust and unbelief, in not staying the full time for *Samuel's* coming (which was the first wry step taken notice of in his Apostasie) that he, who now was so hot for the worship of God, that he could not stay for the Prophets coming, would ere long quite give it over, yea, fall from enquiring of the Lord, to ask counsel

counsel of the Devil, by seeking to a Witch, and from seeking counsel of the Devil, should at the last and worst act of his bloody tragedy, with his own hands throw himself desperately into the Devils mouth by self-murder. Surely he would have strangled at it more than *Hazael* did at the plain character *Elisha* gave of him to his face. And truly all the account we can give of it, is, that his heart was naught at first; which *Samuel* upon that occasion hinted to him, *1 Sam. 13.* when he told him, *the Lord had sought him a man after his own heart; David* he meant, who afterward fell into a sinne greater as to the matter of the fact, than that for which *Saul* was rejected of God, and yet having but an habitual sinceritie, as the root of the matter in him, happily recovered out of it, for want of which, hypocritical *Saul* miscarried finally; so true is that proverb, *that frost and fraud have dirty ends*; Now there is a double reason for this recovering strength of sinceritie; one taken from the nature of sinceritie it self; the other from the promise by God settled on the soul where sinceritie is found.

First, from the nature of sinceritie it self; sinceritie is to the soul, as the soul is to the body: It is a spark of divine life kindled in the bosome of the creature by the Spirit of God. It is the seed of God remaining in the Saint, *1 Job. 3. 9.* Now as the seed cast into the womb of the earth, and quickned there by the influence of heaven upon it, doth put forth its head fresh, and green in the Spring, after many a cold nip it hath had from the Winter; so doth sincere grace after temptations and falls, when God looks out upon it with the beams of his exciting grace; but the hypocrite wanting this inward principle of life, doth not so; he is a Christian by Art, not by a new nature, drest up like a Puppet, in the fashion and outward shape of a man, that moves by the jinnets which the workman fastens to it, and not inform'd by a soul of its own, and therefore as such an image, when worn by time, or broken by violence, can do nothing to renew it self, but crumbles away by piece-meals, till it comes at last to nothing; so doth the hypocrite waste in his profession without a vital principle to oppose his ruine that is coming upon him. There is great difference between the wool on the sheeps back, which thorn, will grow again, and the wool of the sheeps skin on a wolfs back; clip that, and you shall see no more grow in.

in its room. The sincere Christian is the sheep, the hypocrite is the wolf clad in the sheeps skin; the application of it is obvious.

2.

Secondly, the sincere soul is under a promise, and promises are restorative, *Psal. 19. 7. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.* Hebr. מוֹשִׁיב restoring the soul. It fetcheth back the soul to life, as a strong Cordial one in a fainting fit, which virtue is proper to the promissory part of the word, and therefore so to be taken in this place. Now the sincere soul is the only right heir of the promises. Many sweet promises are laid in for the assuring succour and auxiliary aid to bring them off all their dangers and temptations, *Prov. 28. 18. Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved.* Now mark the opposition, *but he that is perverse shall fall at once;* that is, suddenly, irrecoverably, *Job 8. 20. God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers;* he will not take them by the hand, Hebr. that is, to help them up when they fall; nay, the hypocrite is not only destitute of a promise for his help, but lies also under a curse from God. Great pains we find him take to rear his house, and when he hath done, *leans on it, but it shall not stand; he holds it fast, but it shall not endure.* *Job 8. 15. A little that the righteous hath, is better than the riches of many wicked,* *Psal. 37. 16. but why? see the reason, ver. 17. 18. for the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the Lord upholdeth the righteous.* The righteous man in that Psalm is the upright; by the wicked is meant the hypocrite. A little true grace mixt with much corruption in the sincere Christian, is better than the hypocrites riches (great faith, zeal and devotion,) he brags so of. The former hath the blessing of the promise to recover it when decaying; these the curse of God threatening to blast them, when in their greatest pomp and glory. The hypocrites doom is to grow worse and worse, *2 Tim. 2. 13. Those very Ordinances which are effectual (through the blessing of the promise) to recover the sincere soul, being cursed to the hypocrite give him his bairn and ruine.* The Word, which opens the eyes of the one, puts out the eyes of the other, as we find in the hypocritical Jews, to whom the Word was sent to *make them blind,* *Elay 6. 9. 10. It melts and breaks the sincere soul, as in *Jehoiach, 2 Kings 22. 19. but meeting with a naughty false heart, it hardens exceedingly, as appear'd in the same Jews, *Jerem. 42. 20. before the Sermon they speak***

fair, *whatever God saith, they will do*; but when Sermon is done, they are further off than ever, from complying with the command of God. The hypocrite he hears for the worse, prays for the worse, falls for the worse; every Ordinance is a wide door, to let Satan in more fully to possess him, as *Judas* found the sop.



CHAP. XVIII.

Of a supporting and comforting property sincerity hath, shewn in several particular instances.

THirdly, sincerity hath a supporting, comforting vertue; It lifts the head above water, and makes the Christian float a top the waves of all troubles, with a holy presence, and gallantry of spirit, *Psal. 11. 24. unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness*; not only light after darknesse, when the night is past, but in *darknesse* also; *Out of the eater comes meat, and out of the strong, sweetnesse*. Those afflictions which feed on, yea, eat out the hypocrites heart, the sincere soul can feed on them, suck sweetnesse from them, yea, hath such a digestion, that he can turn them into high nourishment both to his grace and comfort. A paughty heart is merry only while his carnal chear is before him, *Hosea 2. 11. God tells Israel, he will take away her feasts, and all her mirth shall cease*; her joy is taken away with the cloth; sinceritie makes the Christian sing, when he hath nothing to his supper. *David* was in none of the best case when in the cave, yet we never find him merrier; his heart makes sweeter musick than ever his Harp did, *Psal. 57. 7. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise*; The hypocrites joy, like the strings of musical instruments, crack in wet weather; but sinceritie keeps the soul in tune in all weather. They are unsound bodies that sympathize with the season, clearly

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in fair, but ill and full of aches in foul; so the unsound heart, a few pinching providences let him going, kill him as a sharp winter doth weak bodies; whereas the sincere soul, never is more hail, never more comfortable; afflictions do him but this courtesie, to call in his affections, which in the summer of prosperity were possibly too much diffused and scattered among creature delights, and unite them more entirely and closely upon Christ, into whose bosome he goes as directly when storms come, as the bee to its hive; and he must needs be comfortable, that hath so soft a pillow to lay his head on as Christs lap; since ritie keeps the souls mouth open, to receive the sweet consolations that drop from Word and Spirit; indeed all the promises are directed to such. But hypocrisie is like the squinancy in the throat of the sick man, he burns within, and can get nothing down to quench the fire which his sins have kindled in his soul. Conscience tells him, when sweet promises are offer'd, there are not for me, I have dealt falsely with God and man; it is the sincere soul God invites, but I am a rotten-hearted hypocrite: And how much more comes such a poor wretch of *Dives* his misery in hell, I pray? *Dives* burns, and hath not a drop to quench his tongue, The hypocrite in affliction he burns too, and hath indeed, not a drop, but a river, a fountain full of water, yea, of blood presented to him, but he cannot drink it down, he cannot make any use of it for his good; his teeth are set so close, no key can open them; his hypocrisie stares him in the face, it lies like a maffise at his door, and will suffer no comfort to come near him; and which is worst, he that hath no bread, or he that hath and cannot eat it? none so witty and cunning as the hypocrite in prosperity to ward off the reproofs, to shift from the counsels of the Word; and in affliction, when conscience awakes, none so skilful to dispute against the comforts of the Word. Now he is Gods close prisoner, no comfort can come at him; if God speak terror, who can speak peace? *Lam. 3. 65. give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them*; sorrow of heart is the hypocrites curse from God in affliction, and what God layes on, sticks close. The word for sorrow in the Hebrew signifies a shield that fenceth, and covers over, and doth (saith one upon this place) denote that disease Physicians call *cardiac passio*, which so oppresseth the heart, that it is covered *sicut scuto*, as with.

with a shield or lid over it, and keeps all relief from the heart; such is the sorrow of the hypocrite in affliction, when once his conscience awakes, and God fills him with the amazing thoughts of his own sins, and Gods wrath pursuing him for them. But I shall descend to instance in a few particular kind of afflictions, and shew what comfort attends sincerity in them all.

SECT. I.

First, sincerity supports and comforts the soul under reproaches from men. These are no petty trials: they are reckon'd among the Saints martyrdoms, *Heb. 11. 36.* called there *cruel mockings*; yea, not unworthy to be recorded among the sufferings of Christ, the matchlesse patience and magnanimity of his Spirit, appeared not only in enduring the Crosse, but in *despising* the shame, which the foul tongues of his bloody enemies loaded him unmercifully with; mans aspiring mind can least brook shame; credit and applause is the great idol of men that stand at the upper end of the world for parts or place; give but this, and what will not men do or suffer? One wiser than the rest, could see this proud humour in *Diogenes*, that endured to stand naked, embracing a heap of snow while he had spectators about him to admire his patience (as they thought it) and therefore was ask't, *Whether he would do thus, if he had none to see him.* The hypocrite is the greatest credit-monger in the world, 'tis all he lives on almost, what the breath of mens praise sends him in; when that fails, his heart faints; but when it turns to scorn and reproaches, then he dies, and needs must, because he has no credit with God, while he is scorn'd by man; whereas sincerity bears up the soul against the wind of mans vain breath, because it hath conscience, and God himself to be his compurgatour, to whom he dare appeal from mans bar. O how sweetly do a good conscience, and the Spirit of God witnessing with it, feast the Christian at such a time! and no matter for the hail of mans reproaches that rattle without, while the Christian is so merrie within doors. *David* is a pregnant instance for

this, *Psalm 41. 11. By this I know that thou favour'st me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me, How David?* does not thy enemy triumph over thee? I pray see the condition he at present was in; he had fallen into a great sin, and the hand of God was on him in a disease, chastising him for it, as appears, *ver. 4.* his enemies from this take advantage to speak him all to naught; *ver. 5. Mine enemies speak evil of me;* no doubt, charging him for an hypocrite; when they come to visit him, it is but to gather some matter of reproach, which they presently blab abroad, *v. 6.* yea, they are not ashamed to say, *ver. 8.* that an evil disease, or as it is in the *Hebrew, a thing of Belial* (that is his sin) *cleaveth to him;* now God hath met with him, now he lieth, he shall rise no more; yea, his familiar friend, in whom he trusted, serves him as ill as the worst of his enemies, *vers. 9.* was ever poor man lower? and yet can he say his enemy triumphs not over him? his meaning therefore we must take thus; That notwithstanding all these reproaches cast upon him; yet his spirit did not quail, this was above them all; God kept that up, and gave him such inward comfort, as wiped off their scorn as fast as they threw it on; their reproaches fell (as sometimes we see snow) melting as fast as they fell, none lay upon the spirit to load and trouble it. And how came David by this holy magnanimity of spirit, these inward comforts? *ver. 12.* he tells us, *As for me, thou upholdest me in my integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.* As if he had said, thou doest not by me, O Lord as mine enemies do; they pick out my worst, and revile me for it; if there be but one sore plat, one sinful part of my life, like flies, they light there; but thou overlookest my sinful slips and failings, pardoning them, and takest notice of my uprightness, which amidst all my infirmities thou upholdest, and so set'st me before thy face, communicating thy love and favour to me notwithstanding the sins, that are found mingled with my course of obedience; this kept up the holy mans spirit, and makes him end the *Psalm* joyfully, *verse 13. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting.* We live (Christians) in reproaching times; he that is so over dainty of his name, that he cannot bear to see some dirt, and that good store too, cast upon his back by reviling tongues, must seek a path to travel in by himself to heaven; but, for thy com-
fort.

fort (Christian) sincerity, though it cannot priviledge thee from travellers fare, and keep thee from being dastit with calumnies, yet it will do thee this kinde office, that the dirt which lightes on thy coat shall not soak into thy soul to damp thy joy, and chil thy inward comfort. Reproaches without may be comfortably endured, yea triumphantly worn as a crown, if they meet not with a reproaching conscience within. Yea, sincerity will do more than this comes to; it will not only comfort thee under the *persecution of the tongue, but hand also*; not only quench the fire, which from thence is spit on thy face, by tongues set on fire by hell; but it will comfort thee in the very mouth of fire it self, if God shall suffer thee by persecutors to be cast into it; sincerity makes thee indeed fearful to sin; O, thou darest not touch one of these coals; but it will make thee bold to burn, and even hug joyfully the flames of marrydome when call'd to them. So little afraid was that sincere servant of Christ, an *Irish Martyr*, Mr. Fox records, among many other undaunted Champions of the truth, that when the Magistrate of the place (where he was to be burned) and the officers of the *Bishop* that condemned him, were in a hot contest, wrangling which of them should pay for the wood that should make the fire for his burning; he presently sent to desire them, *They would not fall out upon that occasion, for he would take off the burden from them both, and be at the cost himself.* Blessed soul! he made not so much ado of spending his blood and sacrificing his life, as they about a few pence wickedly to procure the same.

SECT. II.

Secondly, sincerity girds the soul with comforting strength, when conflicting with affliction from the hand of God. Many are the sorts of afflictions with which God exerciseth his sincere servants; to name a few;

First, when the Lord toucheth his outward man, by sicknesse; or his inward man, by spiritual conflicts; sincerity is a comfortable companion in both. The hypocrite above all, feares falling into Gods hands, and well he may, for he is able to do
him

him most hurt: therefore no sooner God takes hold of his collar, either of these ways, but his joy gives up the ghost; he, like some murderer (whose doom is writ plain in the Law) gives himself for a dead man, when once he is clapt up in prison. This made Job such a wonderling to his wife, because he held up his holy course, when battered so sadly by the afflicting hand of God, with renewed afflictions; *Hast thou yet held thy integrity?* what, nothing but blows come from Gods hand and yet continue to bless him? this was strange to her, but not to him, who could call her foolish woman for her pains? but not charge God foolishly for all he smarted so under his hand: Sinceritie enables the Christian to do two things in this case, which the hypocrite cannot. To speak good of God, and to expect good from God; and the soul cannot be uncomfortable, though head and heart ake together, which is able to do these.

I.

First, sinceritie enables the Christian to think and speak well of God. A false-hearted hypocrite, his countenance falls, and his heart rises, yea, swells with venome against God, though he dare not always let it drive out of his mouth, yet he has bloody thoughts against him in his heart. *Hast thou found me, O my enemy?* saith the wretch; he loves not God; and therefore a good thought of God cannot dwell in his soul; all that God has done for him, though never so bountifully, is forgotten, and imbittered with the overflowing of his gall at the present dealings of God to him, he frets and fumes; you shall hear him sooner curse God, than charge himself; but the sincere soul nourisheth most sweet and amiable apprehensions of God, which bind him to the peace, that he dare not think or speak unbecoming the glory or goodness of God, as we see in David, *Psal. 39. 9. I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou Lord didst it.* This holy man had a breach made both in his body and spirit at this time; he was sick and sad; yet he remembers from whose hand the blow came: *Thou Lord didst it:* Thou, whom I love dearly, and so can take it kindly; thou whom I have offended, and so take it patiently: yea, thou who mightest have cast me into a bed of flames, instead of my bed of sickness, and therefore I accept thy correction thankfully. Thus he catches the blow, without retorting it back upon God, by any quarreling discontented language.

Secondly,

Secondly, sinceritie enables the soul to expect good from God, when his hand presseth hardest on body or soul, *Psalm 38*. Never was *David* in a worse case for body and soul; it would break a flinty heart to read the sad moans that this throbbing soul makes, in the anguish of his flesh, and bitter agony of his spirit; one would have thought they had been the pangs of a soul going away in despair; yet even in this great storm, we find him casting out his shout, anchor of hope, and that takes fire hold of God for his mercy, *Psalm 138*. *In thee O Lord do I hope, thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.* This expectation of good from God, corrects and qualifies the bitterness that is upon his palate, from his present sorrow; so *Psalm 40*. *17. I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me.* My state at present is sad enough, but my comfort is, I am not cast out of his mind, I know his thoughts are at work to do me good. Holy *Job* proves that he is not an hypocrite (as his friends uncharitably charged him) by this confidence he had on God in the depth of all his afflictions, *Job 13*. *15, 16. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. I will maintain my ways before him, he also shall be my salvation; for an hypocrite shall not come before him.* As if he had said, if I were not sincere, I durst not appeal thus to God, and comfortably believe while God is killing of me, that he would yet save me; for an hypocrite shall not come before him, that is, he dare not thus trust himself in Gods hands; and yet desce in his promise when his neck is on the block, & Gods knife at his throat; no, if he could he would never come in his sight; his conscience tells him God knows him too well, to intend him any good, and therefore when God begins to lay his hand on him (except his conscience be desolent and feared (which is the curse that God now and then brands the grosse hypocrite with) he presently hath the scent of hell-fire in his soul, in a fearful expectation thereof, and looks on these present afflictions, though but a cloud of a hand breadth, as those which will spread further & further till the shades of that everlasting night overtake, and encompass him in hells utter darknesse.

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SECT. III.

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Thirdly, sinceritie comforts the Christian, when he wants successe visibly to crown his endeavours in his place and calling. A great affliction no doubt to a gracious soul; As, when a Minister of the Gospel spends his strength, and swailes out his life to a gain-saying people, that sit like stocks and stones under his Ministry, no more moved than the seats they sit on, and the pillars they lean to, ignorant and profane he found them, and such he sees he is like to leave them, after twenty years may be almost twice told, spent among them. This must needs be a heart-aking trial to one, that God hath given a compassionate heart to souls; It costs the mother no small pains to bring forth a living child; but what are the bitter throws of one that travels with a dead child? such is the travel of a poor Minister with a dead-hearted people, yet the portion of none of the meanest of Gods messengers; indeed God sets his most eminent servants about the hardest work.

Now sincerity lightens this affliction, and sends in that which may cheer the soul under it. *Paul* saw he should not carry all to heaven with him he preacht unto, to many the Gospel was a *sawer of death unto death*. The sweet perfume of the Gospel proved a deadly scent to hasten and heighten their damnation; this could not be but sad to, so tender a Physician, to see his Patients die under his hands; yet he thanks God, that makes him triumph in Christ, 2 Cor. 2. 14. But how can he do this? poor souls drop to hell from under his Pulpit hearing him, and he triumph? this is as strange as to see the father follow his childes mournful hearse, not weeping, but singing and dancing. Mark, and the wonder will cease, he doth not triumph that they perish, but that he is not guilty of their blood; not that they are damned, but that he sincerely endeavoured their salvation, *vers. 17. For we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ*; had Paul dropt some wild gourd of error into his doctrine, or mingled some ingredient of his own, with what Christ the great Physician had ordered, he would have had little list to triumph; but

but preaching pure Gospel, and that purely, with a sincere heart, he might triumph in Christ, that made him faithful, and shall triumph over them when he meets them again at the great day at the bar of Christ, where, to their face he shall witness against them, and vote with Christ for their eternal destruction. Methinks I hear all the faithful Ministers of Christ, giving an account to him, on whose errand they were sent, in the language of *Jeremiah's* prayer, *Jer. 17. 16. Lord, we have not desired this woful day thou knowest, which now hath taken hold of these wretched souls, and which we warn'd them of; that which came out of our lips (in our preaching to them) was right before thee; the life of their souls was dear and precious to us; we could have sacrificed our temporal lives to save the eternal life of their souls; but nothing we could say or do, would stay them, to hell they would go, over all the prayers, tears and intreaties out of thy Word, which stood in their way. This will make the sincere Ministers of Christ lift up their head with joy, and such forlorn wretches hang down their heads with shame to look Christ or them in the face, though now they can brazen it out with an impudent fore-head. So for Parents and Masters; sincerity in your relations will comfort you, though you see not your seed come up, which you have sown upon them in your godly examples, holy instructions, and seasonable corrections. David was one that walks in his house with a perfect heart, Psal. 101. 2. careful in the nurture of his children, as appears in his pious counsel to Solomon, 2 Chron. 28. 9. (though not without failings) But many of his children were none of the best; one incestuous, another imbrewing his hands in his brothers blood, a third catching at his Crown traiterously while his father was alive, which made this holy man sadly fore-see how the squares would go when he was dead and gone; yet in this great disorder of his family, how comfortable do we find him on his dying-bed? Though my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure, 2 Sam. 23. 5. surely he had done his duty sincerely, this was his evidence for his interest in the Covenant, and the Covenant was all his desire and salvation.*

In a word, in times of publick calamity, when the flood of Gods wrath comes rowling in upon a Nation, like waves, irre-

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sistibly

sistibly at the wide breach, which the high crying sins of the times make, and the few righteous that are found upon the place, labour to stand in the gap, by their prayers begging the life of Nation; but God will not hear, (for so it sometimes falls out, though they were like *Noah, Job, and Daniel, greatly beloved of God*, that no bayl will be taken for a Nation under arrest of Gods judgments;) even then sincerity will be a sweet support while we share with others in the common calamity. *Jeremiah*, he bestirr'd him zealously for God in testifying against the sins of the times, and for the people faithfully and earnestly with God by prayer; but he could neither convert them by his preaching, nor divert the wrath of God by his praying. The Jews bid him hold his peace, and prophecy no more against them: God stops his mouth also, and bids him pray no more for them. Now in this dismal state of things, what easeth his sorrowful heart, swollen with grief for their sins and judgments hastening upon them, like an Eagle to her prey? Truly nothing can, but the remembrance of his sincerity to God and man in those debauched times, *Jer. 18. 20. Remember that I stood up before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them.* As if he had said, O Lord, though I cannot prevail with this rebellious generation to repent of their sins, or with thy Majesty, to repent of thy wrath gone out by an irreversible decree against them; yet, remember that I have been faithful in my place both to thee and them; whereas on the contrary, horror and amazement of spirit is the portion (in such times of publick calamity) of hyhocrites, as we see in *Pashur*, *Jer. 20.* who was a man that bare great sway at Court in *Jeremiah's* time, a bitter enemy to him, and the message he brought from God to the Jews, labouring to sooth up the King and Princes with vain hopes of golden days coming: (point blank against the Word of the Lord, in the mouth of *Jeremiah*) and what becomes of him when the storm falls on that unhappy people? *Jeremiah* tells him his doom, *v. 4.* that God will make him a *Magor Masabib*, a terror to himself; He should not only share in the common calamity, but have a brand of Gods especial wrath set upon him above others.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, sinceritie girds the Christian with strength of comfort, when deprived of those opportunities which sometime God had intrusted him with for serving of him. An affliction (considered in it self) so grievous to a gracious soul, that he knows none he fears more; he could choose any (might he be his own carver) before it: to be poor, disgraced, persecuted, any thing, rather than be laid aside as a broken instrument, unserviceable to his God. Indeed he values his life, and all the comforts of it, by the opportunities they afford for the glorifying God. *David* stops the mouth of his soul, which began to whisper some discontented language, with this, that he should yet praise God, *Psal. 42. Why art thou disquieted O my soul? I shall yet praise him.* All is well with *David*, and no cause of disquiet in his soul (whatever besides goes crosse to him) may he but praise God, and have opportunity of glorifying him. *Joseph*, when God had so strangely raised him pinacle high, as I may say, to honour in a strange Land, he doth not blesse himself in his preferment, carnally to think how great a man he is, but interprets the whole series of providence, bringing him at last to that place (wherein he stood compeer to a mighty King) to be no other than giving him an opportunity of being eminently serviceable to God in the preservation of his Church, which was at that time contain'd in his fathers family. *God hath sent me hither* (saith he) *before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance,* Gen. 45. 7. This holy man made his place give place to the work, he was call'd to do in it for God, counting the honour of his honour, to lie in the opportunity he had by it, of serving God and his Church. It must therefore needs be a sad affliction to a Saint, when such opportunities are taken from him, that at any time he hath enjoy'd. But sinceritie can make good work of this also, if God will have it so. 'Tis sad to the Christian to be laid aside, but it is comfortable to him to remember, that when he was not, he did not melt his talents away in sloth, or waste them away in riot, but was faithful in improving them

for God; he counts it his affliction that God employs him not as he hath done; but he is not sorry that God can do his work without him; yea, it is a sweet comfort to him, as he lives at the graves mouth, to think that the glory of God shall not go down to the grave with him; though he dies, yet God lies to take care off his own work; and it is not the cracking of one string, or all, that can mar the musick of Gods providence, who can perform his pleasure without using any creature for his instrument. In a word, 'tis sad to him to be taken from any work, wherein he might more eminently glorifie God, yet this again comforts him, that God counts that done, which the Christian sincerely desires to do. *Dauids* good will in desiring to build the Temple, was as much in Gods account, as if he had done it; many shall be at the last day rewarded by Christ, for cloathing and feeding the poor, who when on earth had neither cloaths nor bread to give, yet having had a heart to give, shall be reckon'd amongst the greatest benefactors to the poor. This appears from *Mat. 25. 34.* where Christ is represented, speaking not to some few Saints that had great estates to bestow on charitable uses, but to all his Saints, poor as well as rich; *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, &c. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, &c.* Mark, not ye that were rich, but ye; that is, all, such as had bread, you gave that out; you that had not bread or money to give, (when you could not draw out your purse, you) yet drew out your souls to the hungry; Hear this, O ye precious souls that God hath made sincere, and take comfort; May be you stand low in the world, your calling is mean, your estate next to nothing, which makes you little regarded by your neighbours that over-top you. Canst thou say, though thou beest but a servant to some poor Cobler, that thou desirest to walk in the truth of thy heart, approving thy self to God in thy whole course? This Bird will sing as sweet a note in thy breast, as if thou wert the greatest *Monarch* in the world. That which brings comfort to the greatest Saint in a time of distresse, is the same which comforts the meanest in the family, and that is the love and favour of God, interest in Christ, and the precious promises, which in him are *Ye and Amen*. Now sincerity is the best

best evidence for our title to those. It will not be so much insisted on, whether much or little has been done by us, as whether that much or little were in sincerity. *Well done good and faithful servant*, not *Well done*; thou hast done great things, ruled States and Kingdoms, been a famous Preacher in thy time, &c. but thou hast been faithful; and that thou mayest be, that stand'st in the obscurest corner of the world. Good *H Ezekiah* knew this, and therefore on his sick-bed he doth not tell God of his great services he had done, (though none had done more) but only desires God to take notice of the truth and sincerity of his heart, *Remember that I have walk't before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight*, *Esay 38. 3.*



CHAP. XIX.

A brief applicatory improvement of the point, both in general and particular branches also.

IT remains that the point be applied in its several branches, which were three; sincerity hath a preserving strength, a restoring strength, and a comforting strength. But for quick dispatch, we shall do it under two heads, clapping the two former into one.

First, therefore hath sincerity a strengthening virtue, whereby it either preserves the soul from falling into sin, or helps the Christian fallen, up again.

First, this affords thee, (Christian) a further discovery of thy heart, whether sincere or not; put it here upon the tryal. Dost thou find a power imparted to thee, whereby thou art enabled

Use II.

enabled to repel a temptation to sin, when thou hast no weapon left thee to defend thee against it, but the command forbidding it, or some arrow taken out of the quiver of the Gospel, such as the love of Christ to thee, thy love to him, and the like? may be the temptation is laid so cunningly, that thou mayest sin, and save thy credit too, having a back-door open'd to let thee in to it secretly. Thou shalt hazard nothing apparently of thy temporal concernment; yea, rather greatly advantage it, if thou wilt hearken to the motion: only God stands up to oppose it, his Spirit tells thee, it is against his glory, inconsistent with the duty thou owest, and love thou professest to him. Now, speak what thou thinkest of sinning, the case thus stated; canst thou yet stand it out valiantly, and tell Satan, sin is no match for thee, till thou canst have Gods consent, and reconcile sinning against him, and loving of him together? if so, bless God that hath given thee a sincere heart, and also for opening such a window as this in thy soul, through which thou mayest see that grace to be there, which seen, is the best evidence that God can give thee for thy interest in him, and life everlasting with him. Wert thou an hypocrite, thou couldst no more resist a sin so offer'd, than powder fire, or chaffe the wind.

Again, when thou art run down by the violence of temptation, what is the behaviour of thy soul in this case? dost thou rally thy routed forces, and again make head against thy enemy so much the more eagerly, because foiled so shamefully? or art thou content to sit down quietly by thy losse, and choose rather to be a tame slave to thy lust, than to be at any further trouble to continue the war? The false heart indeed is soon cowed, quickly yields subjection to the conquerour; but the sincere Christian gets heart, even when he loseth ground; uprightnesse makes the soul rebound higher in holy purposes against sin, by its very falls into sin. *Job 40. 5. Once have I spoken, (he means foolishly, sinfully) but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.* This made holy David beg of God to be spared a little, that he might have time to recover his strength before he went hence; loth he was to go beaten out of the field, might he but live to recover his losses by repentance of, and some victory over those sins that had weakened and worsted him, then death should be welcome; like that brave Captain, who wounded in fight, desired some

to bold him up, that he might but see the enemy run before he died, and he should close his eyes in peace. Deal therefore impartially with thy own soul, which way do thy falls and failings work? if they wear off the edge from thy conscience, that it is not so keen and sharp in its reproofs for sin; if they bribe thy affections, that thou beginnest to comply with those sins with which formerly thy contest was, and likest pretty well their acquaintance, thy heart is not right; but if still thy heart meditates a revenge on thy sin that hath over-powered thee, and it lies on thy spirit (like undigested meat on a sick stomach) thou canst have no ease and content to thy troubled soul till thou hast clear'd thy self of it, as to the reigning power of it; truly then thou discoverest a sincere heart.

Secondly, This shewes of what importance it is to labour for sincerity; without it we can neither stand against, nor rise when we fall into temptation; whatever thou beg'st of God, forget not a sincere heart. David saw need of more of this grace than he had, *Psal. 51. 10. Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew in me a right spirit;* and happy was it for him he had so much, as to make him desire more of it: What folly is it to build a house with beams on fire? The hypocrites building must needs come to naught, there is a fire unquench'd; the power of hypocrisy unmortified, that it will consume all his goodly profession; he carries into the field a heart that will deliver him up into his enemies hands. And he is sure to be overcome to whom his own side is not true.

Thirdly, bless God O sincere Christian for this grace; it is a blessing invaluable, Crowns and Diadems are not to be compar'd with it. In this, thou hast a heart after Gods own heart; a heart to his liking; yea, a heart to his likeness. Nothing makes thee liker God in the simplicity and purity of his nature, than sincerity. Truth is that God glories in; he is a God of truth. When Haman was bid to say what should be done to the man that the King delighted to honour, he thinking the King meant no other than himself, would flie as high as his ambition could carry him, and what doth he choose, but to be cloath'd with the Kings own apparel royal? When God gives thee sincerity, he cloaths thy soul with that which he wears himself, who cloaths himself;

Use 2.

Use 3.

himself with truth, and righteousness as a garment. By this thou art made a Conquerour, greater than ever *Alexander* was; he overcame a world of men, but thou a world of lusts and Devils. Did one blesse God at the sight of a Toad, that God made him a man and not a Toad? how much more thankful oughtest thou to be to God, who hath made thee that wert a hypocrite by nature, (which is far worse) an upright Christian? It is a notable saying of *Lactantius*, *Si nemo est, quin emori malit, quam converti in aliquam Bestia figuram, quamvis hominis mentem sit habiturus; quamto miserius est in hominis figura animo esse efferato?* If (saith he) a man would choose death, rather than to have the face and shape of a Beast, though he might withall keep the soul of a man, how much more miserable is it under the shape of a man, to carry the heart of a beast? yet such a one is the hypocrite, yea worse; he doth only under the shape of a man, but in the disguise of a Saint, carry a beastly filthy heart within him.

Use 4.

Fourthly, let this encourage thee who art sincere against the fears of final Apostasie. Though sincerity doth not privilege thee from falling, yet thy Covenant-state which thou art in (if sincere) secures thee from final Apostasie. Because thy stock of grace in hand is small, thou questionest thy persevering; can these weak legs (thinkest thou) bring me to my journeyes end; the few pence in my purse (little grace in my heart) bear my charges all the way to heaven, through so many expences of trials and temptations? Truly no, if thou wert to receive no more than thou hast at present; the bread thou hast in the cupboard will not maintain thee all thy life; but (soul) thou hast a Covenant will help thee to more when that grows low; hath not God taught thee to pray for *thy daily bread*, and dost thou not find that the blessing of God in thy calling diligently followed, supplies thee from day to day? And hast thou not the same bond to sue for thy spiritual daily bread? hast thou not a Father in heaven, that knows what thou needest for thy soul as well as body? hast thou not a dear brother, yea, husband that is gone to heaven, where plenty of all grace is to be had, and that on purpose on his childrens errand, that he might keep their souls graces and comforts alive in this necessitous world? All power is in his hands, he may go to the heap, and send what he please for your succour, and can you starve while he hath fulnesse of grace

grace by him that hath undertaken to provide for you, *Luke 10. 35.* The two pence which the *Samaritan* left, were not enough to pay for cure and board of the wounded man; therefore he passeth his word for all that he should need besides; Christ doth not only give a little grace in hand, but his bond for more to the sincere soul, even as much as will bring them to heaven, *Psal. 84. 11.* *Grace and glory he will give, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

Fifthly, take heed of resting on, or glorying in thy sincerity. 'Tis true, it will enable thee to resist temptations, and recover out, when in temptation; but who enables that? where grows the root that feeds thy grace? not in thy own ground, but in heaven; it is God alone that holds thee and it in life; he that gave it, is at cost to keep it. *The Lord is thy strength, let him be thy song*; What can the *Axe*, though sharp, do, without the *Workman*; Shall the *Axe* say I have cut down, or the *Chisel*, I have carv'd? is it not the skill and art of the *Workman* rather? when able to resist temptation, say, *The Lord was on my side, or else I had fallen*; Set up an *Eben-Ezer*, and write on it, *hitherto the Lord hath helped me.*

Though God promiseth in the *Psalme* even now cited, to give grace and glory to the upright; yet he will not give the glory of his grace to uprightness, *2 Sam. 22. 24.* we have *David* asserting his uprightness, and how he was preserv'd by it, *I was also upright before him, and have kept me from mine iniquity*, verse 25. he declares the fruit of his uprightness, how God bare testimony to it by rewarding him for it, in vindicating him before, and giving him victory over his enemies. Therefore the *Lord* hath recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in his eyesight. Now lest he should set up himself, or applaud his own uprightness to the prejudice of Gods grace, he sweetly corrects and bounds these passages, *v. 33. God is my strength and power, and he maketh my way perfect.* As if the holy man had said, I pray mistake me not, I do not ascribe the victory over my enemies within me or without, to my self and my uprightness; no, God did all, he is my strength and power, yea, it is he that makes my way perfect; if I be sincere more then others in my way, I must thank him for it, for he makes my way perfect. He found me at first as crooked a piece, and walking in as

Use 5.

crooked wayes as any other, but he made me and my way perfect and strait. Had God pleased, he could have made *Saul* as perfect as *David*; had God left *David*, he would have been as crooked and false-hearted as *Saul*.

The last branch of the point was, sincerity hath a comforting strength in all sorts of affliction. The Applicatory improvement of which shall be only this.

Use

Let it teach us not to fear affliction, but hypocrisie. Believe it (friends) affliction is a harmlesse thing to a sincere soul; it cannot be so great as to make it inconsistent with his joy and comfort; a gracious soul in the most sharp affliction can spare his tears and pity to bestow them on the hypocrite, when in all his pomp and glory; he hath that in his bosome that gives him more comfortable apprehensions of his own affliction; than standers by have, or can have of them; which made once a holy man (when the pangs of death were on him) to ask a servant of his, weeping by his bedside for him, *What she meant by her fears, saying, never fear that my heavenly Father will do me any hurt.* Indeed affliction is not joyous to the flesh, which hath made some of Gods dear children awhile to shrink, but after they have been acquainted with the work, and the comforts which God bestows on his poor prisoners through the grate, they have learn't another time, like the bird that at first putting into the Cage flutters, and shews her dislike of her restraint, but afterwards comes to sing more sweetly, than when at liberty to flie where she pleased. Be not therefore so thoughtful about affliction, but careful against hypocrisie; if the bed of affliction proves hard and uneasy to thee, it is thy self that brings with thee what makes it so. Approve thy self to God, and trust him who hath promised to be his Saints bed-maker in affliction, to make it soft and easie for thee. O what a cutting word will it be in a dying houre, when thou art crying, Lord, Lord, mercy on a poor creature, to hear the Lord say, I know thee not; 'tis not the voice of a sincere soul, but an hypocrite that howles on his bed of sorrow? what then wilt thou do, when fallen into the hands of God, with whom thou hast but jugged in thy profession, and never sincerely didst love? if that speech was so confounding to the Patriarchs, *I am Joseph whom you sold*, that they could not endure his presence, knowing their own guilt; how intolerable will it be to hear from Gods

own mouth such language in a time of distresse, I am God whom you have mock't, abused and sold away for the enjoyment of your lusts, and do you now come to me? Have I any thing for you but a hell to torment you into all eternity?



VERSE 14.

And having on the breast-plate of righteousness.



Hese words present us with a second piece of Armour commended to, and charged upon all Christs souldiers, *A breast-plate*, and the metal it is to be made of, *Righteousnesse*. Concerning which, a double enquiry would be made. First, what *righteousnesse* is here intended. Secondly, why compared to this piece of the souldiers Armour, the *Breast-plate*.



CHAP. I.

Contains the Explication of the words.

First, what is the *righteousness* here meant? the Scripture speaks of a twofold *righteousness*, the one *legal*, the other *evangelical*.

I.

First, a legal righteousness; that which God required of man in the Covenant of Works, Rom. 10. 5. Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the Law, that the man which doth those things shall live. Three things concur to make up this Law-righteousness.

First, an obedience absolutely perfect to the Law of God, that is perfect *extensive*, in regard of the object; *intensive* in regard of the subject; the whole Law must be kept with the whole heart; the least defect either of part or degree in the obedience spoiles all.

Secondly, this perfect obedience to the Law of God must be *personally* performed by him that is thus righteous. *The man that doth these things shall live*; in that Covenant God had but mans single bond for performance, (no surety engaged with him) so that God having none else to come upon for the default, it was necessary (except God will lose his debt) to exact it personally on every man.

Thirdly, this perfect personal obedience must be perpetual. This Law allows no after-game; if the Law be once broken, (though but in one wry thought) there is no place for repentance in that Covenant, though it were attended with a life afterward never so exact and spotless. After-obedience, which but due, cannot make amends for former disobedience; he doth not satisfy the Law for killing a man once, that doth so no more. How desperate were our condition, if we could not be lifted in
Christ.

Christ's muster-roll, till we were provided of such a breast-plate as this is? *Adam* indeed had such a righteousness made to his hand, his heart and the Law were unisons; it answered it, as face answers face in a glasse; it was as natural to him to be righteous, as now it is to his posterity to be unrighteous. God was the engraver of his own image upon man, which consisted in righteousness and holiness; and he who made all so perfect, that upon a review of the whole Creation, he neither added, nor altered any thing, but *saw all very good*, was not lesse curious in the master-piece of all his work, *he made man perfect*. But *Adam* sinn'd, and defiled our nature; and now our nature defiles us, so that never since could *Adams place* (righteousness I mean) fit the breast of any meer man? if God would save all the world for *one* such righteous man, (as once he offer'd to do *Sodom* for *ten*) he could not be found. The *Apostle* divides all the world into *Jew* and *Gentile*, Rom. 3. 9. he is not afraid to lay them all in the dirt, they are all under sinne, *there is none righteous, no, not one*. Not the braggest *Philosopher* among the *Gentiles*, nor the precisest *Pharisee* among the *Jews*; we may go yet further, not the holiest Saint that ever lived can stand righteous before that bar. *Enter not into judgment with thy servant*; (saith *David*) *for in thy sight shall no living man be justified*, Psal. 143. 2. God hath nailed that door up, that none can for ever enter by a Law-righteousness into life and happiness. This way to heaven is like the Northern passage to the *Indies*, who ever attempts it, is sure to be frozen up before he gets half way thither.

The second righteousness which the Scripture speaks of, is an *evangelical righteousness*. Now this also is twofold; *A righteousness imputed, or imparted*; *The imputed righteousness*, is that which is wrought by Christ for the believer; the imparted, that which is wrought by Christ in the believer. The first of these, the *imputed righteousness*, is the righteousness of our justification, that by which the believer stands just and righteous before God, and is called by way of distinction from the latter, *the righteousness of God*, Rom. 3. 21. Rom. 10. 3. Not as if the other righteousness were not of God also; But,

First, because this is not only wrought by Christ, but also perform'd in Christ, who is God; and not inherent in us, though

for us; so that the benefit of it redounds by faith to us, as if we had wrought it; hence Christ call'd *the Lord our righteousness*.

Secondly, because this is the righteousness, and not the other, which God hath ordained to be the meritorious cause of the justification of our persons, and also acceptance of our inherent righteousness imparted by him to us. Now this righteousness belongs to the *fourth piece of Armour, the shield of faith*; indeed we finde it bearing its name from that grace, *Rom. 4. 11*, where it is called *the righteousness of faith*, because apprehended and applied by faith unto the soul; the *righteousness* therefore which is here compared to the *breast-plate*, is the latter of the two, and that is the righteousness of our sanctification which I called a righteousness imparted, or a righteousness wrought by Christ in the believer. Now this take thus described.

It is a supernatural principle of a new life, planted in the heart of every childe of God by the powerful operation of the holy Spirit, whereby they endeavour to approve themselves to God and man, in performing what the Word of God requires to be performed to both. Briefly let us unfold what is rolled up in this description.

1. First, here is the *efficient*, or workman, *the holy Spirit*; hence it is, the several parts of holiness are called, *fruits of the Spirit*, *Gal. 5. 22*. if the Spirit be not at the root, no such fruit can be seen on the branches as holiness; *sensual, and not having the Spirit* are inseparably coupled, *Jude 19*. Man by his fall hath a double losse; Gods love to him, his likeness to God. Christ restores both to his children, the first by his righteousness imputed to them; the second by his Spirit re-imparting the lost image of God to them, which consists in righteousness and true holiness; who, but a man can impart his own nature, and beget a childe like himself? and who, but the Spirit of God can make a creature like God, by making him partaker of the divine nature?

2. Secondly, here is the work produced. *A supernatural principle of a new life*;

1. By a principle of life, I mean, an inward disposition and quality, sweetly, powerfully and constantly inclining it to that which is holy; so that the Christian (though passive in the production)

on his afterward active, and co-working with the Spirit in all actions of holiness, not as a life-less instrument is in the hand of a Musician, but as a living child in the hand of a father; therefore they are said to be led by the Spirit, Rom. 8.

2. 'Tis a principle of new life, the Spirit's work was not to chase and recover what was swooning, but to work a life *de novo*, in a soul quite dead; *you hath he quickned who were dead in trespasses*. The Devil comes as an *Oratour* to persuade by argument, when he tempts; the Spirit as a *Creator* when he converts. The Devil draws forth and enkindles what he finds raked up in the heart before: But the holy Spirit puts into the soul what he finds not there, called in Scripture *the seed of God*, 1 Joh. 3. 9. *Christ formed in you*, Gal. 4. 19. *the new creature*, Gal. 6. 15. *the Law put by God into the inner man*, Jerem. 31. 33. which Paul calls *the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, Rom. 8. 2.

3. It is a supernatural principle by which we distinguish it from *Adams* righteousness and holiness, which was connatural to him, as now sin is to us; and had he stood, would have been propagated to us, as naturally as now his sin is. Holiness was as natural to *Adams* soul, as health was to his body, they both resulting *ex principiis recte constitutis*, from principles pure and right disposed.

Thirdly, here is the soil or subject in which the Spirit plants this principle of holiness, *the child of God*; *Because ye are sonnes, he hath sent the Spirit of his Sonne into your hearts*, Gal. 4. 6. not a child in all his family that is unlike his father; *as is the heavenly*, so are they that are heavenly, and none but children have this stamp of true holiness on them. As the Apostle, Rom. 8. 9. concludes *we have not the Spirit* if we be in the flesh, (that is in an unholy sinful state) so he concludes, *we are not his* (children) if we have not his Spirit this transforming and sanctifying us. There is indeed a holiness and sanctification taken in a large sense, which may be found in such as are not children, so all the children of believers are holy, 1 Cor. 7. who are not all children of God; yea, false professors also gain the name of being sanctified, Heb. 10. 29. because they pretend to be so; but that which the Scripture calls righteousness and true holiness, is a sculpture the Spirit engraves on none, but the children of God;

God. The Spirit sanctifies none but whom Christ prays his Father to sanctifie, and they are his peculiar number given of God to him, *John 17.*

4. Fourthly, here is the efficacy of this principle, planted by the Spirit in the heart of a childe of God, *whereby he endeavours.* As the heart which is the principle of natural life in the body from the infusion of natural life, is ever beating and working, so the principle of new life in the soul ever endeavouring. The new creature is not still-born; true holiness is not a dull habit, that sleeps away the time with doing nothing. The woman cured by Christ, *rose up presently and ministred unto them, Mat. 8.* No sooner this principle is planted in the heart, but the man riseth up to wait on God, and act for God with all his might and main; the seed which the sanctifying Spirit cast into the soul, is not lost in the soile, but quickly shews it is alive by the fruit it bears.

5. Fifthly, here is the imperfect nature of this principle; as it shews its reality *by endeavouring*, so its imperfection, that it enables but to an endeavour, not a full performance. Evangelical holiness rather makes the creature willing, than able to give full obedience. The Saints heart leaps when his legs do but creep in the way of Gods commandments. *Mary ask't where they had laid Christ,* meaning (it seems) to carry him away on her shoulders, which she was not able for to do; her affections were stronger than her back. That principle of holiness which is in the Saint, makes him list at that duty which he can little more than stir. *Paul* a Saint of the first magnitude he gives us his own character, with other eminent servants of Christ, rather from the sincerity of their will and endeavour, than perfection of their work, *Heb. 13. 8. Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly;* he doth not say in all things we do live honestly, as if no step were taken away by them. No, he durst not say so for a world, but thus much he dares assert for himself and brethren, that they were willing in all things to do what was holy and righteous; where willing is not a weak listless velleity, but a will exerted in a vigorous endeavour; it weighs as much in an impartial eare, as that of the same *Paul, Acts 24. 16. herein do I exercise my self;* he was so willing, as to use his best care and labour in the wayes of holiness, and
having

having this testimony in his own breast, he is not afraid to lay claim to a good conscience, though he doth not fully attain to that he desires; *We trust we have a good conscience, willing, &c.* he means in the favourable interpretation of the Gospel, for the Law allows no such good conscience.

Sixthly, here is the uniformity of this principle in its actings; *To God and man*; true holiness doth not divide what God joyns together, *God spake all these words*, Exod. 20. First table and second also. Now a truly sanctified heart dares not skip, or blot one word God hath writ, but desires to be a faithful executor to perform the whole will of God.

Seventhly, here is the order of its acting, *as to God and man*; so, first *to God*, and then *to man*; yea, to God in his righteousness, and charity to man, 2 Cor. 8. 5. *first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the Will of God.* God is first serv'd, and man in obedience to the Will of God.

Eighthly, here is the rule it goes by, *what the Word of God requires*; Apostolical holiness is no true holiness, we cannot write in Religion a right line without a rule, or by a false one. And all are false rules besides the Word, *To the Law, and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them*, Isa. 8. 20.

The second thing to be enquired, is, *why righteousness and holiness are compared to the breast-plate.* And that is for a twofold use that the fouldier makes of, and benefit he receives from this piece of Armour.

First, the breast-plate preserves the most principal part of the body, and that is the breast, where the very vitals of man are closely coucht together; and where a shot and stab is more deadly than in other parts that are remote from the fountain of life. A man may out-live many wounds received in the armes or legs, but a stab in the heart, or other vital parts, is the certain messenger of death approaching. Thus righteousness and holiness preserve the principal part of a Christian, his soul and conscience; We live or die spiritually, yea, eternally, as we look to our souls and consciences. 'Tis not a wound in estate, cred't, or any other worldly enjoyment that kills us in this sense. These touch not, hazard not the Christians life any more, than the shaving of the beard, or pairing of the nails do the mans; spiritual vitals are

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seated

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8.

seated in the soul and conscience; it must be a spiritual dagger that stabs these, and that only is sin, which is said *to hunt for the precious life*, Prov. 6. 24. This is the dart that strikes the young man *through the liver*, who *hasteth to his lust*, as *the bird to the snare*, and *knoweth not that it is for his life*, Prov. 7. Now righteousness and holiness defend the conscience from all wounds and harms, from sin, which is the weapon Satan useth to give the conscience its deadly stab with.

Prov. 28. 1,

Secondly, the breast-plate by defending this principal part, emboldens the souldier, and makes him fearless of danger, and that is as necessary in fight as the other; it is almost all one for an army to be killed or cowed; A dead souldier slain upon the place, will do in a manner as much good, as a dead-hearted souldier that is dismayed with fear; his heart is killed while he is alive; And a naked breast exposeth the unarmed souldier to a trembling heart; whereas one otherwise cowardly, having his breast defended with a plate of proof, will the more boldly venture upon the pikes. Thus righteousness by defending the conscience, fills the creature with courage in the face of death and danger; whereas guilt (wich is the nakednesse of the soul) puts the stoutest sinner into a shaking fit of fear. *The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion.* They say sheep are scared with the clatter of their own feet as they run, so is the sinner with the din of his guilt. No sooner *Adam* saw his plate off, and himself to be naked, but he is afraid at Gods voice, as if he had never been acquainted with him. Never can we recover truly our courage, till we recover our holiness: *If our hearts condemn us not, when have we boldness with God*, 1 John 3. 21.





CHAP. II.

A short point from the connexion of this piece of Armour with the first; Righteousnesse with Truth.

THE words thus opened, the Observations are now easie to be drawn from them; but the copulative, *And*, with which this piece of Armour is so closely buckled to the former, bids us make a little stand to take notice, how lovingly truth and holiness are here conjoyn'd like the sifter-curtains of the Tabernacle (so called in the *Hebrew*) and 'tis pity any should unclasp them, which God hath so fitted each to other. Let that then be the note from hence.

Exod. 26. 3.

Note. That truth and holinesse must go together.

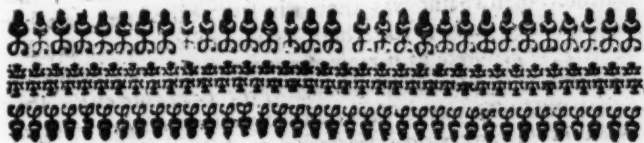
Note.

First, Take truth for *truth of doctrine*. An orthodox judgement, with an unholy heart, and ungodly life, is as uncomely as a mans head would be on a beasts shoulders. That man hath little cause to brag, that what he holds is truth, if what he doth be wicked; poor wretch, if thou beest a slave to the Devil, it matters not to what part thy chain is fastened, whether head or foot; he holds thee as sure to him by thy foot in thy practice, as he would by thy head, if heretical and blasphemous; yea, thou art worse on it in some respects, than they who are like themselves all over. Thy wickednesse is greater, because committed in the face of truth; many, the mistakes of their erroneous judgements, betray them unto the unholinesse of their practice; their wicked lives are the conclusion which follows necessarily upon the premises of their errors; but thy judgement lights thee another way (except thou meanest further to

accumulate thy sin by fathering thy unholinesse on truth it self) They only misse their way to heaven in the dark, or are misled by a false light of an erroneous judgement, which possibly rectified, would bring them back into the path of holiness, but thou sinnest by the broad light of truth, and goest on boldly to hell at noon-day; like the Devil himself, who knows truth from error well enough, but hates to be ruled by it. Should a Minstrel sing to a sweet tune with her voice, and play to another with her hand that is harsh and displeasing; such musick would more grate the judicious ear, than if she had sung to what she plaid? Thus to sing to truth with our judgement, and play wickednesse with our heart and hand in our life, is more abhorring to God and all good men, than where the judgement is erroneous, as well as the life ungodly. *Nahast* had not enraged *David* so much, if he had come with an Army of twenty thousand men into the field against him, as he did by abusing his Embassadours so basely. The open hostility which many expresse by their 'ungodly lives, does not so much provoke God, as the base usage they give to his truth, which he sends to treat with them; yea, in them. This kindles the fire of his wrath into a flame to purpose, when he sees men put scorn upon his truth, by walking contrary to the light of it, and imprisoning it from having any command over them in their lives, and yet own it to be the truth of God.

Secondly, take it for *truth of heart*, and so truth and holiness must go together. In vain do men pretend to sincerity, if they be unholy in their lives. God owns no unholy sincerity. The termes do clasp one with another; sincerity teacheth the soul to point at the right end of all its actions, the glory of God; now it is not enough to set the right end before us, but to walk in the right way to it; we shall never come at Gods glory out of Gods way; holinesse and righteousness is the sincere mans path set by God, as a Cause on which he is to walk, both to the glorifying of God, & the being glorified by God. Now he that thinks to find a shorter cut, and a nearer way to obtain this end, than this way, he takes but pains to undo himself. As he finds a new way of glorifying God, which God hath not chalkt, so he must find a new heaven which God hath not prepared, or else he must go without one to reward him for his pains. O friends! look to find this stamp
of,

of righteousness and holiness on your sincerity. The *proverb* saith, hell is full of good wishes, of such, who now, (when 'tis too late) wish they had acted their part otherwise when on earth, than they d'd. And do you not think there are there more than a good store of good meanings also? such who pretend'd, when on earth, they meant well, and their hearts were honest, however it hapt that their lives were otherwise? what a strange delusion is this? if one should say, though all the water the bucket brings up, be naught and stinking, yet that which is in the Well is all sweet, who would believe him? Thy heart upright, and thy meanings good, when all that proceeds from thy heart in thy life is wicked, how can it be? who will believe thee? surely thou doest not thy self.



CHAP. III.

Wherein the grand point from the words is laid down, that the Christians especial care should be to keep on his breast-plate, i. e. maintain the power of holiness in his conversation, with the first reason of the point taken from God, his design as to this.

IT is now time, having measured the ground, to lay the bottom stone, on which the structure from these words is to be rear'd. I thought to have drawn out several points as distinct foundations to build our discourse upon; but shall now rather choose to unite all in a single point (as one main building) though I make a few more rooms therein, to entertain, what else should have been handled severally. The point is this.

Deu.

Doctr.

Doctr. That he, who means to be a Christian indeed, must endeavour to maintain the power of holiness and righteousness in his life and conversation. This is to have the breast-plate of righteousness, and to have it on also; he is a holy righteous man that hath a work of grace and holiness in his heart; as he a living man that hath a principle of life in him: but he maintains the power of holiness that exerts this vigorously in his daily walking, as he the power of natural life, in whom the principle of life seated in the heart, impowers every member to do its particular office in the body strenuously. Thus walkt the primitive Christians (in whose veins saith *Jerom*, the blood of Christ was yet warm) their great care was to keep on this breast-plate of righteousness close and entire, that it neither might loosen by negligence; nor be broken by presumptuous sinning; the character then a Saint was known by from other men, was his holy walking, *Luke* 1. 16. There 'tis said of *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth*, They were both righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless. This was also *Pauls* every days exercise, to have alwayes a conscience void of offence towards God and man, *Acts* 24. Never did any more curiously watch the health of their body, than he attended to the health of his soul, that no unholiness or unrighteousness (which is the only bane of it) might distemper and defile it. And truly we who come after such holy ones in the same profession, do bind our selves to our good behaviour, that we will walk holily and righteously as they did. The point carries its evidence on its forehead, and needs rather pressing than proving; and therefore I may be pardoned if the demonstrations of the point be handled as well as motives to, as reasons for the duty, which will spare work in the Application. Reasons of the point shall be taken from several heads.

1.

First, in regard of God, whose great design is to have his people a holy people. This is enough to oblige, yea to provoke every Christian to promote what God hath so strongly set upon his heart to effect. He deserves to be cashier'd, that endeavours not to pursue what his General declares to be his design. And he to have his name blotted out of Christs muster-roll, whose heart stands not on tip-toes ready to march, yea, to run on his design. It is an honourable Epitaph which *Paul* sets

on

on the memory of *David* long before deceased, *Acts* 13.36. that he in his own generation serv'd the will of God; he made it the business of his life to carry on Gods designs. And all gracious hearts toucht with the same loadstone of Gods love, stand to the same point. All the private ends of a sincere soul are swallowed up in this, that he may do the will of God in his generation. This he heartily prays for, *Thy will be done*, this is his study to find what is the good and acceptable will of God; which is the very cause why he loves the Bible above all other books of the world beside, because in none but that can he find what is the mind and will of God concerning him. Now I shall endeavour to shew, that this is the great design of God to have his people holy. It runs like a silver thread through all Gods other designs.

SECT. I.

First, it appears in his very decrees, which (so far as they are printed and expos'd to our view in the Scripture) we may safely look into. What was God driving at in his electing some out of the lump of mankind? was it only their impunity be desired, that while others were left to swim in torment and misery, they should only be exempted from that infelicity? No sure; the Apostle will tell us more, *Ephes.* 1. 4. *He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy.* Mark, not because he foresaw that they would be of themselves holy, but that they should be holy; this was that God resolv'd he would make them to be. As if some curious workman seeing a Forrest growing upon his own ground of trees (all alike, nor one better than another) should mark some above all the rest, and set them apart in his thoughts, as resolving to make some rare pieces of workmanship of them. Thus God chose some out of the lump of mankind, whom he set apart for this purpose, to carve his own image upon them, which consists in righteousness and true holiness; a piece of such rare workmanship, which when God hath finish'd, and shall shew it to men and Angels, will appear to exceed the fabrick of heaven and earth it self.

SECT.

SECT. II.

2.

Secondly, it was his design in sending his Sonne into the world. It could be no small occasion that brought him hither. God wants not servants to go on his ordinary errands. The glorious Angels, who behold his face continually, are ready to tie wherever he sends them. But here God had a work to do of such importance, that he would put trust not in his servants, but his Sonne alone to accomplish. Now what Gods design was in this great work, will appear by knowing what Christ was, for they were (both Father and Sonne) agreed, what should be done before he came upon the stage of action: See therefore the very bottom of Christs heart in this his great undertaking open'd, *Titus 2. 14. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works*; Had man kept his primitive righteousness, Christs pain and pains had been spared. It was mans lost holiness he came to recover. It had not been an enterprize becoming the greatness and holiness of such a one as the Son of God to engage for, less than this. Both God and man, between whom Christ comes to negotiate, call for holiness. Gods glory, mans happiness; neither of which can be attain'd, except holiness be restored to man. Not Gods glory, who as he is glorious in the holiness of his own nature and works, so is he glorified by the holiness of his peoples hearts and lives; were it possible (which is the height of all blasphemy but to think) that the holiness of God could be separated from any of his attributes or works; God himself would cease to be glorious; his sovereignty would degenerate into tyranny, his wisdom into craft, his justice into cruelty, &c. Now the glory of a Gods attributes and works, resulting from his holiness in them all, it follows that then we glorify God, when we give him the glory of his holiness, and who but a holy creature, will or can do that? while man stands under the power of sinne, how can he give God the glory of that, which his own sinful nature makes him despise, and hate God for? Had Christs design therefore been to procure man a pardon, and not restore his lost ho-

holinesse, he had been but a *Minister of sinnes*, and instead of bringing glory to God, he had set sinne in the Throne, and only obtain'd a liberty for the creature to dishonour God without controll. Again, mans happinesse could not have been obtain'd without a recovery of his lost holinesse. Mans happinesse stands in his likenesse to God, and fruition of God; he must have the first, before he can enjoy the latter; he must be like God, before God can take any liking in him; and God must take full content in man, before he admits him to the enjoyment of himself, which that he may do, Christ undertakes to make his people holy, as God is holy. You see now what was the great designe that the heart of Christ was so full with, to make us a holy people. Well therefore may the Apostle bring in that heavy charge against all unholy professors, which he doth with tears, *Phi. 3. 18. That they are enemies of the Crosse of Christ.* Christ came to destroy the works of the Devil; The loose unholy walker, he goes about to destroy the work of Christ. The Lord Jesus lays down his heart-blood to redeem souls out of the hand of sinne and Satan, that they may be free to serve God without fear in holinesse; and the loose Christian, (if I may call him so) *denies the Lord that bought him*, and delivers up himself basely unto his old bondage, from which Christ had ransom'd him with so great a summe; whose heart doth not tremble at such horrid ingratitude?

SECT. III.

Thirdly, it is Gods great designe in the regenerating work of the Spirit on the hearts of his people, to make them righteous, and fit them to walk holily before him, *Ezek. 36. 26, 27.* where God promiseth a new heart, and to put his Spirit into them; and why will he do this? that he may cause them to walk in his statutes, keep his judgments, and do them. An old heart would have served well enough to have done the Devils drudgery withal. But God intending them for more high and noble employment, to lift up their head out of sins prison, and prefer them to his

own service, therefore he throws away their goale cloaths, and beautifies them with the graces of his Spirit, that their hearts may suit their work. When God ordered the Temple to be built with such curious care and costly materials, he declared that he intended it for holy use; That was not so glorious as the spiritual Temple of a regenerate heart is, which is *the workmanship of God himself*, Eph. 2. 10. and for what intent rear'd by him, if we read on, we may see, *Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath fore-ordained that we should walk in them.* This accents the unrighteousnesse and unholinesse of a Saint with a circumflex, it lays a deeper aggravation I mean upon his sinne, than others, because committed against such a work of the Spirit as none have in the world besides. A sinne acted in the Temple was greater than if the same had been by a Jew committed in his private dwelling, because the Temple was a consecrated place. The Saint is a consecrated person, and by acts of unrighteousnesse he profanes Gods Temple; The sinne of another is theft, because he robs God of the glory due to him; but the sin of a Saint is sacrilege, because he robs God of that which is devoted to him in an especial manner. Better not to repent at all, than to repent of our repentance; not to ~~now~~ and dedicate our selves to him, and after this to enquire how we may evade and repeal this act; such a one tells the world he findes *some iniquity in God*, that alters his opinion and practice formerly taken up by him. In a word, the Saint is not only by the Spirit consecrated to God, but by the Spirit indued with a new life from God; *you hath be quickned, who were dead in trespasses and sins*, Eph. 2. 2. A noble principle of high extraction, given you on a high designe, that you should live up to that principle in righteousness and holinesse; when God breath'd a rational soul into man, he intended not that he should live with the beasts, and as the beasts; nor that thou should'st have thy conversation as a meet carnal man doth, but that *as thou hast received Christ, so thou shouldst walk in him*, Col. 2. 6. The Apostle blame the *Corinthians* for living below themselves, and like the poor-spirited men of the world in their corrupt passions: *Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* 1 Cor. 3. 3. when thou Christian affectest unholily, thou sinnest at a high rate indeed; others sin against the light of God in their consciences, there is the furthest they can go; but thou sinn'st against the

life.

life of God in thy very heart. The more unnatural any act is, the more horrid. 'Tis unnatural for a man to be cruel to his own flesh; for a woman to go about to kill the childe in her womb, O how your ears tingle at such a flagitious act! what then art thou going to do, when by thy unholy walking thou art killing the b. be of grace in thy soul? Is Herod mark't for a bloody man that would have butcher'd Christ newly born in the world? and canst thou without horror attempt the murdering of Christ newly form'd in thy heart?

SECT. 4.

Fourthly, it is the great designe God drives at in his Word and Ordinances, to make his people holy and righteous. The Word of God, 'tis both seed to beget, and food to nourish holinesse begotten in the heart; every part of it contributes to this design abundantly. *The preceptive part* affords a perfect rule of holinesse for the Saint to walk by, not accommodated to the humours of any, as mens laws are, who make their laws as Taylours their garments, to fit the crooked bodies they are for, so they the crooked minde of men. The commands of God gratifie the lusts of none; they are suited to the holy nature of God, not the unholy hearts of men. *The promises* present us with admirable encouragements to roll and allure us on in the way of holinesse; all of them so warily laid, that an unholy heart cannot without violence to his conscience, lay claime to any one of them, (God having set that flaming sword, conscience, in the sinners bosome, to keep him off from touching or tasting the fruit of this tree of life) and if any prophane heart be so bold, while he is walking in the ways of unrighteousnesse, to finger any of the treasure that is lock't up in the promises, it doth not long stay in their hands, but God sooner or later, makes them throw it away as *Judas his thirty pieces*, their consciences telling them they are not the right owners; false comforts from the promises, like riches (which *Solomon* speaks of) *make themselves wings and flie away* from the unholy wretch; when he thinks he is most sure of them. *Again, the threatnings*, the minatory part of the Word, this runnes like a devouring gulph on either

4.

side of the narrow path of holiness and righteousness, ready to swallow up every soul that walks not therein, *Rom. 1. 18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.* To the promissory and minatory is annexed the exemplary part of the Word, as book-cases to confirm our faith concerning the truth and certainty of both. The promises they are back't with the examples of holy men and women, who have beaten the path of holiness for us, and through faith and patience in their holy course, have at last obtain'd the comfort of the promises in heavens bliss, to the unspeakable encouragement of all that are ascending the hill after them. To the threatnings are annex many sad examples of unholy souls, who have undone themselves, and damned their own souls in unholy ways, whose carcasses are as it were thrown upon the shore of the Word, and exposed to our view in reading and hearing of it, that we may be kept from being ingulfed in those sins that were their perdition, *1 Cor. 10. 6. These were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.* Thus we see how the whole composition of the Scripture befriends holiness, and speaks what the design of God therein is, which yet to carry on the more strongly, God hath appointed many holy Ordinances to quicken the Word upon our hearts. Indeed all of them are but the Word in several forms, Hearing, Prayer, Sacraments, Meditation, holy Conference, the Word is the subject matter of them all; only as a wise Physician doth prepare the same drug several ways, sometimes to be taken one way, sometime another, to make it more effectual, and refresh his Patient with variety; so the Lord consulting our weakness, doth by his Word administering it to us now in this, and anon in that Ordinance for our greater delight and profit, aiming still at the same end in all, even the promoting of holiness in the hearts and lives of his people; what are they all but as veins and arteries; by which Christ conveys the life-blood and spirits of holiness into every member of his mystical body? The Church is the garden, Christ the fountain, every Ordinance as a pipe from him, to water all the beds in this garden; and why, but to make them more abundant in the fruits of righteousness?

SECT. V.

Fifthly, 'tis his design in all his providences. *All things* (that is, all providences especially) *work together for good to them that love God*, Rom. 8. 28. and how do they work for their good, but by making them more good and more holy? providences are good and evil to us as they finde, or make us better or worse; nothing is good to him that is evil. As God makes use of all the seasons of the year for the harvest, the frost and cold of the Winter as well as the heat of the Summer; so doth he of fair and foul, pleasing and displeasing providences for promoting holiness; Winter-providences kill the weeds of lusts, and Summer-providences ripen and mellow the fruits of righteousness; when he afflicts, 'tis for our profit to make us partakers of his holiness; *Heb. 12. 10.* Afflictions *Bernard* compares to the *Texel*, which though it be sharp and scratching, is to make the cloth more pure and fine. God would not rub so hard if it were not to fetch out the dirt that is ingrained in our natures. God loves purity so well, he had rather see a hole than a spot in his child's garments; when he deals more gently in his providences, and lets his people sit under the sunny bank of comforts and enjoyments, fencing them from the cold blasts of affliction, 'tis to draw forth the sap of grace, and hasten their growth in holiness. *Paul* understood this, when he besought the Saints at *Rome*, by the mercies of God to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, Rom. 12. 1. Implying, that mercies came from God to us on this very errand; God might reasonably expect such a return. The Husband-man, when he lays his compost on his ground, looks to receive it at harvest again in the fuller crop; and so doth God by his mercies; therefore he doth so vehemently complain of *Israel's* ingratitude, *Hosea 2. 8.* *She did not know that I gave her corn and wine, and oyle, and multiplied her silver, which they prepared for Baal.* God took it ill, and well might he; that they should entertain *Baal* at his cost; if God sends in any cheer to us, he would have us know that it is for his own entertainment; he means to come and sup upon his own charge. And what dish is it that pleas-

5.

eth Gods palate? Surely, he that would not have his people eat of any unclean thing, will not himself. They are the pleasant fruits of holinesse and righteousnesse, which Christ comes into his garden to feed on, *Cant. 5. 1. I am come into my garden, my Sister, my Spouse, I have gathered my myrrhe and my spice, I have eaten my honey with my honey-comb; I have drunk my wine with my milk.*



CHAP. IV.

The second reason why the Christian should wear this breast-plate of righteousnesse, and maintaine the power of holinesse so carefully, taken from Satans great designe against it.

2. Secondly, in regard of Satan, whose designe is as much against the Saints holinesse, as God is for it. He hath ever a ray to Gods yea; if God be for holinesse, he must needs be against it; and what should be our chief care to defend, but that which Satans thoughts and plots are most laid to assault and storme? There is no creature the Devil delights so to lodge and dwell in, as man; when he enters into other creatures, it is but on designe against man; as when he entred the *Serpent*, it was to deceive *Eve*: The *fox*, *Mat. 8. 32.* he possesseth them on a designe to dispossesse the *Gergesenes* of the Gospel; but might he choose his own lodging, none pleaseth him but man; and why? because man only is capable by his rational soul of sinne and unrighteousnesse. And as he prefers man to quarter in above all inferiour creatures, so he had rather

rather possesse the souls of men than their bodies; none but the best room in the house will serve this unclean spirit to vomit his blasphemies, and spit out his malice in against God; and why? but because the soul is the proper seat of holiness and sinne. This one gives as the reason why amongst all the wayes that Satan plagued *Job*, he did not choose to make a forcible entry into his body, and possesse him corporally; for certainly he might, that being short of taking away his life (the only thing reserv'd by God out of his commission) and being in his power, sure it was not to spare *Job* that trouble; no pity dwells in a Devils heart; but the very reason seems to be what an Ancient hath noted; The Devil waited for higher preferment, he hoped to possesse his soul, which he longed for a thousand times more; he had rather hear *Job* himself blaspheme God, while he was *compos mentis*, his own man, than himself in *Job* to belch out blasphemies against God, which would have been the Devils own sinne, and not *Jobs*. Thus you see, 'tis holiness and righteousness his spight is at; no gaine comes to the Devils purse, no victory he counts got, except he can make the Christian lose his holiness. He can allow a man to have any thing, or be any thing, rather than be truly, powerfully holy. It is not your riches and worldly enjoyments he grutches so much as your holiness. *Job*, for ought we know, might have enjoy'd his flocks and herds, his children and servants, without any disturbance from hell, if the Devil had not seen him to be a godly man, *one fearing God, and eschewing evil*. This anger'd the wicked spirit; now he tries a fall with *Job*, that if possible, he may un-saint him, and despoile him of his breast-plate of righteousness. His plundering of his estate, burchering his children, carbonadoing (as I may say) his body with sores and boiles, (which were as so many deep slashes in his flesh) was but like some thieves cruel usage of men whom they would rob, on a designe to make them confesse and deliver up their treasure; would but *Job* have thrown the Devil his purse, his integrity I mean, and let Satan carry away his good conscience. Satan would soon have unbound him, and not have cared if he had his estate and children again. The wolfe teares the fleece, that he may come to raven on the flesh, and suck the blood of the sheep; The life blood of holiness is that which this hellish murderer

murderer longs to suck out of the Christians heart. It is not a form of godlinesse, or goodly shews of righteousnesse the Devil malignes, but the power; not the name, but the new nature it self brings this Lion sell out of his Den. Satan can live very peaceably as a quiet neighbour by the door of such as will content themselves with an empty name of profession; this alters not his property, nor toucheth his copy-hold. Judas his profession (he knew) did not put him a step out of his way to hell; the Devil can shew a man a way to damnation through duties and Ordinances of Gods worship. That covetous, trayterous heart which Judas carried with him to hear Christs Sermon, and preach his own, held him fast enough to the Devil, and therefore he gives him line enough, liberty enough to keep his credit awhile with his fellow Apostles; he cares not though others think him a disciple of Christ, so he knows him to be his own slave.

In a word, it is not a superstitious holinesse which offends him; how can it? when he is the institutor of it himself, and that on a subtle design to undermine the true genuine holiness in the hearts of men; and by this time the Church of Christ hath found how deep a contrivance it is. This in all ages hath been to the power of holiness, what the Ivy is to the Oak; the wanton embraces of this mock-holinesse about Religion, hath killed the heart of Scriptural holinesse where-ever it hath prevail'd; 'tis to the true holinesse as the concubine is to the true wife, who is sure to draw the husbands love from her. This brat the Devil hath long put out to nurse to the *Romish Church*, which hath taken a great deal of pains to bring it up for him; and no wonder when she is so well paid for its maintenance; it having brought her in so much worldly treasure and riches. No, 'tis holiness in its naked simplicity, as it is founded upon Scripture-bottome, and guided by Scripture-rule, that he is a sworne enemy against. Indeed this is the flag which the soul hangs out, and by which it gives defiance to the Devil, no wonder if he strives to shoot it down. Now, and not till now the creature really declares himself a friend to God, and an enemy to the Kingdome of darknesse: and here is the ground of that quarrel, which will never cease so long as he continues an unclean spirit, and they to be the holy ones of God. *All that will live*

live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, 2 Tim. 3. 12. Mark first, what it is, that makes the Devil and his instruments take armes, and breath slaughter against Christians, 'Tis their godlinesse; many specious pretences persecutors have to disguise their malice; - but the Spirit of God that looks through all their hypocritical mufflers, is privy to the Cabinet counsels of their hearts, and those instructions which they have from the Devil, that worketh so mightily in them, he tells us, *he that will live godly, shall be persecuted*; down-right godlinesse is the Butt they level their arrows at. Again, observe the kind of godlinesse at which their blood rises, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus*. There are more sorts of holinesse and godlinesse in the world than one; But all may have fair quarter at the Devils hands, except this godlinesse in Christ Jesus. The Devil hath an implacable malice against Christ; he hates, as I may so say, every letter of his name; that godlinesse which is learnt of him, and derived from him, he opposeth to death. Christian blood is sweet to his tooth, but the blood of the Christians godlinesse is far sweeter. He had rather (if he could) kill that than them, rather draw the Christian from his godlinesse, than butcher him for it; yet that he may not stand out, he'll play at small game, and expresse his cruelty upon their bodies, but it is when he cannot come at their souls, Heb. xi. 37. *They were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain*. That which these bloody men principally desired, was to draw them in to sin, and make Apostates of them; and therefore they tempted them before they slew them. The Devil accounts that the compleat victory, when he can despoil them of their Armour, and bribe them from their steadfastnesse in their holy profession. *Let her be defiled, and let her eye look up to Zion*, Micah 4. 7. he had rather see Saints defiled with unrighteousness and sin, than defiled with their blood and gore. Persecution (he hath learnt) doth but mow the Church, which afterward comes up the thicker for it, 'tis unholinesse that ruines it. Persecutors doth but plough Gods field for him, while he is sowing it with the blood that they let out; but profaners that roots it up, and lays all waste, consciences and Churches also.



CHAP. V.

The third reason taken from the excellency of righteousness and holinesse.

3. **T**Hirdly, in regard of holinesse it self; the incomparable excellency whereof commands us to pursue it, and endeavour it with our utmost care and strength.

1. First, it is an excellency peculiar to the rational creature. Inferiour creatures have a goodnesse proper to them, but intellectual beings are only capable of an inward holinesse. God saw every creature he made to be good; only *Angels* and *Man* to be holy; and if we part with holinesse that is our crown, we become worse than the beasts themselves; yea, it is holinesse and righteousness that makes one man differ from another in Gods account. We go by a false heart, when we value men by their external advantages. All stand on a level as to God, till holinesse be super-added. Princes, in whom is seated the Sovereign power, claim as their prerogative, to set the just value on all coyn, what every piece shall go for; this a penny, and that a pound; much more surely doth it belong to God to rate his creatures; and he tells us, *The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour*, Prov. 12. *The tongue of the just is as choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is little worth*, Prov. 10. 20. The Spirit of God compares the righteous to silver and gold, the preciousst of mettals, which above all other mettals are of such account, that only money made of silver and gold is currant in all Countreys; Holinesse will go in both worlds; but external excellencies, such as worldly riches, honours, &c. like leather and brasse money, are of no esteem, but in this beggerly lower world.

2. Secondly, it is holinesse that is, though not our plea, yet our evidence for heaven; *without holinesse none shall see God*. Hea-

ven is a City where righteousness dwells: Though God suffers the earth to bear for a while unholy men, (which it doth not without sweating under their weight, and groaning to be rid of this load,) yet sure he will never pebble heaven with such a crew. Before *Enoch* was translated to heaven, he walk't holily with God on earth, which made God desire his company so soon. O friends! do we like an empty profession, such a Religion as will leave us short of heaven? or can we reasonably expect a dispensation above others, that we should commence glorified creatures in heaven, without keeping our acts, and performing the exercises of godliness, which God hath laid upon those that will stand *Candidates* for that place? Certainly what God hath writ in his Word, as to this, shall stand. He will not make a blot in his decrees for any: which he should, did he alter the method of salvation in the least. Either we must therfore renounce our hopes of coming thither, or resolve to walk in the path of holiness that will lead us thither. That is vain breath which sets not the sails of our affections a going, and our feet a travelling thither, where we would be at last.

Thirdly, it is holiness, and that maintain'd in its power, that capacitates us for communion with God in this life. Communion with God is so desirable, that many pretend to it, that know not what it means: like some that brag of their acquaintance with such a great man, who may be never saw his face, or were admitted into his company, the Spirit of God gives the lye to that man, who saith he hath any acquaintance with God, while he keeps his acquaintance with any unrighteousness, *1 J^o. 1. 6. If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie.* The Apostle is willing to passe for a loud liar himself, if he walks in darkness, and pretends to have fellowship with God. How can they walk together that are not agreed? Communion is founded on union, and union upon likeness. And how like are God and the Devil, holiness and unrighteousness one to the other? There is a vast difference between conversing with Ordinances, and having communion with God. A man may have great acquaintance with Ordinances, and be a great stranger to God at the same time; every one that goes to Court, and hangs about the Palace, doth not speak with the Prince; and what sorry things are Ordinances without this communion with God?

Ordinances are as it were the Exchange, where holy souls trade with God by his Spirit for heavenly treasures, from which they come filled and enriched with grace and comfort. Now what does the unholy wretch? truly like some idle persons that come and walk among Merchants on the Exchange, but have no business there, or commerce whereby they get any advantage. An unholy heart hath no dealings with God, he takes no notice of God, may be, to be sure God takes no such notice of him, as to communicate himself graciously to him. Nay, suppose a person habitually holy, but under the power of some temptation for the present, whereby he defiles himself, he is in this case unfit to have any friendly communion with God. *A righteous man falling down before the wicked, is (saith Solomon) as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring, Prov. 25. 26.* much more is he so when he falls down before the wicked one, and yields to his temptation, now his spirit is royl and muddied; and if we will not use the water of a Spring (though in it self pure and wholesome) when it is troubled, or drink of that Vessel that runs thick, but stay while it be settled and comes clear; can we wonder if God refuseth to taste of those duties which a godly person performes, before the stream be cleared, by the renewing of his repentance for his sin?

4.

Fourthly, holinesse in the power of it is necessary to the true peace and repose of the soul. I do not say our peace is bottom'd on the righteousness of our nature, or holinesse of our lives, yet it is ever attended with these, *No peace to the wicked saith my God.* We may as soon make the Sea alwayes still, as an unholy heart truly quiet; from whence come the intestine wars in mens bosomes, that set them at variance with themselves, but from their own lusts? these break the peace, and keep the man in a continual tempest. As the Spirit of holinesse comes into the heart and the Scepter of Christ, (which is a Scepter of righteousness) bears sway in the life; so the storm abates more and more, till it be quite down, which will not be while we are short of heaven; There only is perfect rest, because perfect holinesse: Whence those frights and fears which make them a *Magor Missabib, terrour round about*, they wake and sleep with the scent of hell-fire about them continually; O 'tis their unholy course, and unrighteous ways that walks in their thoughts; as *Johns* ghost.

ghost in *Herods*. This makes men discontented in every condition; They neither can relish the sweetness of their enjoyments, nor bear the bitter taste of their afflictions. I know there are ways to stupify the conscience, and bind up for a time the fences of an unholy heart, that it shall not feel its own misery; but the virtue of this *opium* is soon spent, and then the wretch is upon the wrack again, and his horror returns upon him with a greater paroxysm; an example whereof I have heard. A notorious Drunkard who used (when told of his ungodly life) to shake off all the threatnings of the Word, that his friends would have fastened on his conscience, as easily as *Paul* did the Viper from his hand, bearing himself upon a presumptuous hope of the mercy of God in Christ. It pleased God to lay him some while after on his back by sickness, which for a time scared his old companions (brethren with him in iniquity) from visiting him, but hearing he was cheery and pleasant in his sickness, ventured to see him, whom they found very confident of the mercy of God, whereby their hands were much strengthened in their old ways; but before he died, this tune was changed to purpose, his vain hopes vanish, his guilty conscience awaken'd, and the poor wretch roasted in the scorching flames of his former ungodly practices, now ready to die, cries out despairingly, *O Sirs, I had prepared a plaister, and thought all was well, but now it will stick no longer*; his guilty conscience rub'd it off, as fast as he clapt it on. And truly (friends) you will find the blood of Christ himself will not cleave to a soul that is in league with any way of sinne and unrighteousness; God will pluck such from the horns of this Altar, that he lie to it, but not from their unrighteousness, and slay them in sight of this Sanctuary they boldly trust to; you know the message *Solomon* sent to *Adonijah*, *If thou shewest thy self a worthy man, not a hair of thy head shall fall, but if wickedness shall be found in thee, thou shalt surely dye*. In vain do men think to shroud themselves under Christs wing, from the hue and cry of their accusing conscience, while wickedness finds a Sanctuary in them. Christ never was intended by God to secure men in their unrighteousness, but to save them from it.

Fifthly, holiness has a mighty influence upon others, when this

this appears with power in the lives of Christians; it works mightily upon the spirits of men; this stops the mouths of the ungodly, who are ready to reproach Religion, and throw the dirt of professors finnes on the face of profession it self. They say frogs will cease croaking, when a light is brought near unto them. The light of a holy conversation hangs as it were a padlock on profane lips; yea, it forceth them to acknowledge God in them. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in heaven,* Mat. 5. 16. yea more, this would not only stop their mouths, but be a means to open their very hearts to the embracing of Christ, and his grace; one reason why such shoals of souls came into the net of the Gospel in primitive times, was, because then the Divinity of the Gospel-doctrine appear'd in the divinity and holinesse of Christians lives. *Justin Martyr* when converted, professed, *That the holinesse which shined in Christians lives and patience, that triumphed over their enemies cruelty at their deaths, made him conclude the doctrine of the Gospel was truth.* Yea, *Julian* himself, as vile a wretch as he was, could say, that the Christian Religion came to be propagated so much, *Propter Christianorum erga omnes beneficia, because Christians were a people that did good to all, and hurt to none.* I am sure we find by woeful experience that in these debauch't times, wherein Religion is so bespattered with frequent scandals, yea, a common loosenesse of professors, 'tis hard to get any that are out, to come under the net of the Gospel. Some beasts there are, that if they have once blown upon a pasture, others will hardly eat of that grasse for some while after. Truly I have had some such sad thoughts as these concerning our unhappy times, that till the ill favour which the pride, contentions, errors, and loosenesse of professors now adays, have left upon the truths and Ordinances of Christ, be worn off, there is little hopes of any great comings in of new converts. The Minister cannot be always preaching; two or three houres may be in a week he spends among his people in the Pulpit, holding the Glass of the Gospel before their faces; but the lives of professors, these preach all the week long; if they were but holy and exemplary, they would be as a repetition of the Preachers Sermon to their families and neighbours among whom they

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converse, and keep the sound of his doctrine continually ringing in their ears; This would give Christians an admirable advantage in doing good to their carnal neighbours by counsel and reproof, which now is seldom done, and when done, it proves to little purpose, because not back't with their own exemplary walking. *It behoves him (saith Tertullian) that would counsel or reprove another, to guard his speech; autoritate propria conversationis; ne dicta factis deficientibus erubescant, with the authority of his own conversation, lest wanting that, what he says, puts himself to the blush.* We do not love one that hath a stinking breath should come very near us; and truly we count one comes very near us that reproofs us; such therefore had need have a sweet scented life. Reproofs are good physick, but they have an unpleasing farewell; 'tis hard for men not to vomit them up on the face of him that gives them; now nothing is more powerful to keep a reproof from thus coming up, than the holiness of the person that reproofs. *Let the righteous smite me, (saith David) it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oyl which shall not break my head.* Plal. 141. 5. See how well it is taken from such a hand, from the authority that holiness carries with it. None but a vile wretch will smite a righteous man with reproach, for smiting him with a reproof, if softly laid on, and like oyl fomented, and wrought into him, (as it should) with compassion and love to his soul. Thus we see how influential the power of holiness would be into the wicked; neither would it be lesse upon our brethren and fellow-Christians. When one Christian sees holiness sparkle in the life of another he converses with, he shall find his own grace spring within him, as the babe in *Elizabeth* at the salutation of *Mary*. Truly one eminently holy is enough to put life into a whole society; on the contrary, the error or looseness of one professor, endangers the whole company that are acquainted with him. Therefore we have so strict a charge, *Heb. 12. Follow peace and holiness, looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.* It is spoken to professors: The Heathens drunkenness, uncleanness, unrighteous walking, did not so much endanger them; but when a root of bitterness springs up among professors themselves, this hazards the defiling of many. A scab on the
wolves

wolfs back is not so dangerous to the sheep, because they will not easily be drawn among such company; but when it gets into the flock, among professors that feed together, pray, hear, and walk in fellowship together, now is the fear it will spread. A loose erroneous professor doth the Devil more service in this kind, than a whole troop of such as pretend to no Religion. The devil gets no credit by them. There are many errors and sinful practises which have long lain upon his hands, and he could not put them off, till he found this way to imploy some professors as his Brokers, to commend them to others, and disperse them for him: and if such do not ensnare and defile others by their unholy walking, to be sure they grieve their hearts, and put them to shame in the world. O how Christians hang down their heads upon the scandal of any of their company! as all the Patriarchs were troubled, when the cup was found in one of their sacks. And 'tis no small matter to make sad the hearts of Gods people. In a word, he that keeps not up in some measure, the power of a holy life, renders himself uselesse and unprofitable; would'st thou pray for others? *A Heathen could bid a wicked man hold his peace, and not let the gods know he was in the ship, when a storm was on them: Would'st thou speak a word of comfort to any mournful soul? O how unfavoury are comforts dropping from such a mouth? would'st thou counsel another? Thy friend will think thou dost but jest, whatever thou sayest in commendation of holinesse, he will not believe that thou thy self dost think it good, for then thou would'st take that thy self, which thou commendest to another.*

6. - Sixthly, holinesse and righteousness, they are the pillars of Kingdomes and Nations; who are they that keep the house from falling on a peoples head, but the righteous in a Nation? ten righteous men (could they have been found in *Sodom*) had blown over the storm of fire and brimstone, that in a few houres entomb'd them in their own ashes; yet, the destroying Angels hands were tyed up as it were, while but one righteous *Lot* was among them, *Hastethce, I can do nothing till thou beest come thither*, Gen. 19. 22. *Rehoboam* and his Kingdom for three years, were strengthened, and might have been three and twenty, if he had not by his unrighteousnesse pull'd it down upon himself and people;

people; for his unhappinesse is dated from the very time of his departure from God. *2 Chron. 1. 1. 16.* *Josiah* when he came to the Crown, found the Kingdom of *Judah* tumbling apace to ruine, yet because his heart was set for God, and prepared to walk before him, God took his bail (as I may so say) for that wretched people, even when they were under an arrest from God, and almost at the prison door, so that their safety was in a manner bound up in his life; for soon after his decease all went so wrack among them. It was an heroick speech of *Luther*, who fore-saw a black cloud of Gods judgements coming over the land of *Germany*, but told some of his friends, that he would do his best to keep it from falling in his dayes; yea, he believ'd it should not; and, said he, *when I am gone, let them that come after me look to it.* This poor Nation of *England*, hath for many generations in a succession, had a number of precious, righteous ones, who have through Gods grace, walkt close with God, and been kept in a great degree unspotted from the defilements of the ungodly times they lived in. These were the *Astles* of their severall ages; these have oft found favour of God to beg the life of this Nation, when its neck hath been on the very block. But they are gone, or wearing away apace, and a new generation coming in their room; unhappy would the day be called when you were born, if you should be the men and women, that by degenerating from the power of holiness, should cut the banks (which was their chief care to keep up) and so let in a desolating judgment to overflow the Land. That heir we count unworthy of his birth and patrimony, who by his debauched courses, prodigally makes away that estate, which by the care and providence of his Ancestors, was through many descents at last transmitted to him; but together with the honour of the family, unhappy ends in him. If ever any age was like to do thus, by the place of their nativity, this present, wherein our sad lot is cast to live, is it. How low is the power of holinesse sunk among us, to what it was but in the last generation; Religion alas runs low and dreggy among professors, God he knows, that will not long suffer it. If *Egypt* knows a dearth is coming by the low ebbing of *Nilus*, surely we may see a judgment to be coming by the low fall of the power of godlinesse. There are great comp'aints of what men have lost in these hurling times; some bemoan their lost places and estates, others the lost lives of their friends in the wars;

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but professors may claim justly the first place of all the mourners of the times, to lament their lost love to the truths of Christ, worship of Christ, servants of Christ; yea, that universal decay which appears in their holy walking before God and man. This is sad indeed; but that which adds a fearful aggravation to this, is, That we degenerate, and grow loose at a time when we are under the highest engagements for holiness that ever people did. We are a people redeem'd from many deaths and dangers. And when better might God expect us to be a righteous Nation? It is an ill time for a person to fall a stealing and pilfering again, as soon as the rope is off his neck, and he let safely come down that Ladder from which he was even now like to be turned off. Surely it added to righteous *Noah's* sin, to be drunk as soon almost as he was set on shore, when a little before he had seen a whole world sinking before his eyes, and he, the priviledg'd person, left by God to plant the world again with a godly seed. O Sirs, the earth hath hardly yet drunk in the Rivers of blood that hath been shed in our Land. The Cities and Towns have hardly got out of their ruins, which the miseries of war laid them in. The moans of the fatherlesse and husbandlesse; whom the Sword bereav'd of these their dearest relations, are not yet silenced by their own death; yea, can our own frights and scares which we were amazed with, when we saw the Nation (like a candle lighted at both ends) on a flame, and every day the fire coming nearer and nearer to our selves, be so soon forgotten? Now, that at such a time as this, a Nation, and that the professing part of it should grow looser, more proud, covetous, contentious, wanton in their principles, and carelesse in their lives, this must be for a lamentation. We have little cause to boast of our peace and plenty, when the result of our deliverance is to deliver us up to commit such abominations; this is as if one whose *quartane* ague is gone, but leaving him deep in a drop sic, should brag his ague hath left him, little thinking that when it went, it left him a worse guest in its place. An unhappy change, God knows it is, to have war, pestilence, and famine removed, and to be left swolne up with pride, error and libertinism. Again, we are a people who have made more pretensions to righteousness and holiness, than our fore-fathers ever did. What else meant the many prayers to God, and petitions to man for Reformation? what interpretation could

could a charitable heart make of our putting our selves under the bond of a Covenant, to endeavour for personal Reformation, and then National, but that we meant in earnest to be a more righteous Nation than ever before? This made such a loud report in foreign parts, that our neighbour-Churches were set a wondering, to think what these glorious beginnings might ripen to; so that now (having put forth these leaves, and told both God and man by them; what fruit was to be looked for from us) our present state must needs be nigh unto cursing, for disappointing the just expectations of both. Nothing can save the life of this our Nation, or lengthen out its tranquillity in mercy to it, but the recovery of the much decayed power of holiness. This, as a spring of new blood to a weak body, would (though almost a dying) revive it, and procure many happy dayes; yea, more happy dayes to come over its head, than yet it hath seen; but alas! as we are degenerating from bad to worse, we do but die lingeringly, every day we fetch our breath shorter and shorter; if the Sword should be but drawn again among us, we have hardly strength to hold out another fit.

Hh 2

CHAP.



CHAP. VI.

Contains the first instance, wherein the Christian is to expresse the power of holinesse, and that is in his behaviour towards sin; Branch't into several particulars.

THE second particular into which the point was branched, comes now to be taken into hand; and that was to instance in some particulars, wherein every Christian is to expresse the power of a holy and righteous life. Now this I shall do under several heads.

First, Christian, be sure thou main tainest the power of holinesse in thy contest with sin, which thou art to expresse in these particulars following.

I.

First, thou must not only refuse to commit broad sinnes, but shun the appearance of sin also; this is to walk in the power of holinesse. The Dove doth not only shie from the Hawk, but will not smell so much as of a single feather that falls from the Hawk. It should be enough to scare the holy soul from any enterprize, if it be but *male coloratum*. We are commanded to *hate the garment spotted with the flesh*, Jude 23. A cleanly person will not only refuse to wallow in the dung-hill (he is a beast indeed) but is careful also that he doth not get so much as a spot on his cloaths as he is eating his meat. The Christians care should be to keep, as his conscience pure, so his name pure, which is done by avoiding all appearance of evil. Bernards three questions are worth the asking our selves in any enterprize. *An licet? an dect? an expedit? Is it lawful?*

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may I do it, and not sin? *Is it becoming me a Christian?* may I do it, and not wrong my profession? that work which would suit a mean, would it become a Prince? *Should such a one as I flee?* said Nehemiah nobly. Lastly, *Is it expedient?* may I do it, and not offend my weak brother? There are some things we must deny our selves of for others sake; though a man could sit his horse, and run him full speed without danger to himself; yet he should do very ill to come scouring thorow a Town, where children are in the way, that may be (before he is aware) rid over by him, and spoiled. Thus some things thou mayest do, and without sin to thee, if there were no weak Christians in thy way to ride over, and so bruise their tender consciences, and grieve their spirits. But alas! this is too narrow a path for many shaking professors to walk in now a dayes; they must have more room and scope for their loose hearts, or else they and their profession must parr. Liberty is the Diana of our times. O what Apologies are made for some suspicious practices? long hair, gaudy garish apparel, spotted faces, naked breasts? these have been call'd to the Bar in former times, and censured by sober and solid Christians, as things at least suspicious, and of no good report; but now they have hit on a more favourable Jury, that find them not guilty; yea, many are so fond of them, that they think Christian liberty is wronged in their censure; Professors are so far from a holy jealousy, that should make them watch their hearts, lest they go too far, that they stretch their consciences to come up to the full length of their tedder; as if he were the brave Christian that could come nearest the pit of sin, and not fall in; as in the *Olympian* games, he wore the Garland away, that could drive that his Chariot nearest the mark, and not knock on it; if this were so, *Paul* mistook when he bade Christians *abstain from all appearance of evil*, 1 Thes. 5. 22. he should rather have said by these mens divinity, *abstain not from the appearance*, only take heed of what is in it self grossely evil; but he that can venture on the appearance of evil, under pretence of liberty, may, for ought I know, commit that which is mote grossely evil, under some appearance of good; it is not hard, (if a man will be at the cost) to put a good colour on a rotten stuff, and practice also.

Secondly, thou must not only endeavour against all sin, but

Zech. 7. 5.

Mat. 10. 42.

that on noble principles, here lies the power of holiness. Many forbear to sin upon such an unworthy account, that God will not thank them for it another day. As it is in actions of piety and charity, God makes no account of them, except he be interested in them; when we fast or pray, God asks, *Do you fast and pray to me, even to me?* when we give almes, a cup of cold water for his sake, given in name of a Disciple, is more valued by him, than a cup of gold for private and low ends; so in sin, God looks that his authority should conclude, and his love constrain us to renounce it; before the Commandments (as Princes before their Proclamations, prefix their Armes and Royal Names) God sets his glorious Name, *God shake all these words, and said, &c.* Exod. 20. and why this? But that we should sanctifie his Name in all we do. A Master may well think himself despised by that servant that still goes on, when he bids him leave off such a work, but has done presently at the entreaty of another. O how many are there that go on to sinne, for all that God sayes to the contrary; but when their credit bids for shame of the world to give over such a practice, they can knock off presently; when their profit speaks, 'tis heard and obey'd. O Sirs, take heed of this, God expects his servants should not only do what he commands, but this at his command, and his only. And as in abstaining from evil, so in mourning for sins committed by us; if we will be Christians indeed, we must take in, yea, prefer Gods concernments before our own. Indeed it were to be wisht, that some were so kind to their own souls, as to mourn for themselves when they have sinn'd; that they would cry out with *Lamech*, Gen. 4. 23. *I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.* Many have such brawny consciences, they do not so much as complain they have hurt themselves by their sinnes, but little of the power of holiness appears in all this; There may be a great cry in the conscience, I am damned, I have undone my self; and the dishonour that is cast upon God by him, not laid to heart. You remember what *Jaab* said to *David*, taking on heavily for *Absalom's* death, *I perceive (said he) if Absalom had been alive, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well,* 2 Sam. 19. 6. Thus we might say to such selvish mourners, We perceive that if thou couldst but save the life of thy soul from

from eternal death and damnation, though the glory of God miscarry'd, thou could'st be pleas'd well enough. But know that a gracious souls mourning runs in another channel; *against thee; thee only have I sinned*, is holy *David's* moan. There is a great difference between a servant that works for another, and one that is his own man (as we say) the latter puts all his losses upon his own head; so much saith he, I have lost by such a ship, so much by a bargain; but the servant that trades with his Masters stock, he, when any losse comes, puts it on his Masters account; so much I have lost of my Masters goods. O Christian think of this; thou art but a servant, all the stock thou trade'st with, is not thine, but thy Gods; and therefore when thou fallest into any sin, bewail it as a wrong to him: So much alas, I have dishonour'd my God, his talents I have wasted, his Name I have wounded, his Spirit I have greiv'd.

Thirdly, he must not only abstain from acting a sinne, but also labour to mortifie it. A wound may be hid, when 'tis not heal'd, cover'd, and yet not cured; some men they are like unskilful Physicians, who rather drive in the disease, than drive out the cause of the disease: corruption thus left in the bosome, like lime unslaked, or an humour unpurg'd, is sure at one time or other to take fire and break out, though now it lies peaceably, as powder in the barrel, and makes no noise: I have read, that the opening of a Chest where some cloaths were laid up, (not very well aired and cleared from the infection that had been in the house) was the cause of a great Plague in *Venice*, after they had lain many years there, without doing any hurt. I am sure we see for want of true mortification, many after they have walkt so long unblameably, as to gain the reputation of being Saints in the opinion of others, upon some occasion, like the opening of the Chest, have fallen sadly into abominable practices; and therefore it behoves us not to satisfie our selves with any thing lesse than a work of mortification, and that followed on from day to day. I protest, saith *Paul*, by my rejoycing in Christ, I die daily; here was a man walkt in the power of holiness; sin is like the *Beast*, *Rev. 13. 3.* which seem'd at one time, as if it would presently die of its wound, and by and by it was strangely healed so as to recover again; many a Saint for want of keeping a streight rein, and that constantly, over some corruption, which

which they have thought they had got the mastery of, have been thrown out the saddle, and by it drag'd dangerously into temptation, unable to resist the fury of lust when it has got head, till they have broken their bones with some sad fall into sin; if thou wouldst Christian, shew the power of holiness, never give over mortifying work, no, nor when thy corruptions play least in thy sight. He that is inclin'd to a disease, gout, stone, or the like, he must not only take physick when he hath a fit actually upon him, but ever and anon should be taking something good against it; so should the Christian, not onely when he finds his corruption stirring, but every day keep his soul in a course of spiritual physick, against the growing of it; this is holiness in its power. Many professors do with their souls in this respect, as deceitful Chyrurgions with their Patients; Lay on a healing plaister one day, and a contrary the next day, that sets the cure back, more than the other set it forward; take heed of this, except thou meanest not only to bring the power of holiness into danger, but the very life and truth of it into question in thy soul.

Fourthly, he must, as endeavour to mortify corruption, so to grow and advance in the contrary grace. Every sin hath its opposite grace, as every poyson hath its antidote; he that will walk in the power of holiness, must not only labour to make avoidance of sin, but to get possession for the contrary grace. We read of a house that stood empty, Matth. 12. 44. *The unclean spirit went out*, but the holy Spirit came not in. That is, when a man is a meer negative Christian, he ceaseth to do evil in some wayes he hath formerly walk't in, but he learns not to do good. This is to lose heaven with short shooting; God will not ask us what we were not, but what we were; not to swear and curse will not serve our turn; but thou wilt be askt, Didst thou blasse and sanctifie Gods Name? It will not suffice thou didst not persecute Christ, but didst thou receive him? Thou didst not hate his Saints, but didst thou love them? Thou didst not drink and swill, but wast thou fill'd with the Spirit? He is the skilful Physician, who at the same time that he evacuates the disease, doth also comfort and strengthen nature. And he the true Christian, that doth not content himself with a bare laying aside evil customs and practises, but labours

to walk in the exercise of the contrary graces. Art thou discomposed with impatience, haunted with a discontented spirit, under any affliction? think it not enough to silence thy heart from quarrelling with God, but leave not till thou canst bring it sweetly to rely on God. Holy *David* drove it thus far, he did not only chide his soul for being disquieted, but he charges it to trust in God. Hast thou any grudgings in thy heart against thy brother? think it not enough to quench these sparks of hell-fire, but labour to kindle a heavenly fire of love to him, so as to set thee praying heartily for him. I have known one, that when he had some envious unkind thoughts stirring in him, against any one, (as who so holy as may not find such vermin sometimes creeping about him?) he would not stay long from the Throne of grace, where that he might enter the stronger protest against them, would most earnestly pray for the encrease of those good things in them, which he before had seem'd to grutch, and so revenged himself of those envious lustings, which at any time rose in his heart against others.

Fifthly, he must have a publick spirit against the sins of others. A good subject doth not only labour to live quietly under his Princes government himself, but is ready to serve his Prince against those that will not. True holiness (as true charity) begins at home, but it doth not confine it self within its own doors. It hath a zeal against sin abroad. He that is of a neutral spirit, and *Gallio* like, cares not what dishonour God hath from others, calls in question the zeal he expresseth against sin in his own bosome. When *David* would know the temper of his own heart, the furthest discovery by all his search, that he could make of the sincerity of it, is his zeal against the sins of others. *Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies;* Psalm 139. 21, 22. having done this, he intreats God himself to ransack his heart; *Search me, and try me O God, if there be any wicked way found in me, &c.* verse 23. as if he had said, Lord, my line will not reach to fathom my heart any further, and therefore if it be possible that yet any evil way may throw it self under this, tell me, and lead me into the way everlasting.

Sixthly, the Christian, when he shews most zeal against sin, and hath greatest victory over it, even then must he renounce

all fiduciary glorying in this. The excellency of Gospel-holiness consists in self-denial. *Though I were perfect* (saith Job) *yet would I not know my soul*, Job 9. 21. that is, I would not be conceited and proud of my innocence; when a man is lift up with any excellency he hath, we say, *he knows it*; he hath excellent parts; *but he knows it*; that is, he reflects too much on himself, and sees his own fate; too pit in the glasse of his own perfections. They who climb lofty mountains, find it safest, the higher they ascend, the more to bow, and stoop with their bodies; and so does the Spirit of Christ teach the Saints, as they get higher in their victories over corruption, to bow lowest in self-denial. Jude, 21. The Saints are bid there, *To keep themselves in the love of God, and then to wait, and look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus unto eternal life*. And Hosea 10. ver. 12, *Sow to your selves in righteousness, reap in mercy*. We sow on earth, we reap in heaven. The seed we are to sow, is righteousness and holiness, which when we have done with greatest care and cost, we must not expect our reward from the hand of our righteousness, but Gods mercy.

CHAP.



CHAP. VII.

A second instance, wherein the power of holiness is to appear in the Christians life, i. e. in the duties of Gods worship.

SECondly, the Christian must exert the power of holiness in the duties of Gods worship. The same light that shews us a God, convinceth he is to be worshipt; and not only so, but that he will be worshipt in a holy manner also. God was very choise in all that belon'd to his worship under the Law. If he hath a *Tabernacle*, the place of worship, it must be made of the choicest materials; The workmen employ'd to make it, must be rarely gifted for the purpose; the sacrifices to be offer'd up, the best in every kind, the males of the flock, the best of the beasts, the fat of the inwards, not the offals. The persons that attend upon the Lord, and minister unto him, they must be peculiarly holy. What is the Gospel of all this? but that God is very curious in his worship; if in any action of our lives we be more holy than others, sure it is to be when we have to do with God immediately; Now this holiness in duties of worship should appear in these particulars.

First, in making conscience of one duty as well as another; the Christian must encompass all within his religious walk. It is dangerous to performe one duty, that we may dispense with our selves in the neglect of another. Partiality is hateful to God, especially in the duties of Religion, which have all a divine stamp upon them. There is no Ordinance of Gods appointment, which he doth not blesse to his people, and we must not reject what God owns; yea, God communicates

Psalm 39. 3.
 Acts 8. 27, 28.
 Luke 24. 35.
 Luke 24. 15.
 Acts 10. 3.

himself with great variety to his Saints, now in this, anon in that; on purpose to keep up the esteem of all in our hearts. The Spouse seeks her beloved in secret duties at home, and finds him not, then she goes to the publick, and meets *him whom her soul loves*, Cant. 3. 4. *Daniel* no doubt had often visited the Throne of grace, and been a long trader in that duty, but God reserv'd the fuller manifestation of his love, and opening some secrets to him, till he did to ordinary prayer joyn extraordinary, fasting and prayer; Then the Commandment came forth, and a messenger from heaven dispatcht to acquaint him with Gods mind and heart, Dan. 9. 3. compared with v. 23. There is no duty, but the Saints find at one time or another, the Spirit of God breathing sweetly in, and filling their souls from it, with more than ordinary refreshing. Sometimes the child sucks its milk from this breast, sometimes from that. *David* in meditation, while he was musing, finds a heavenly heart kindling in his bosom, till at last the fire breaks out. To the *Emmich* in reading of the Word, is sent *Philip* to joyn to his chariot; to the *Apostles* Christ makes known himself in breaking of bread: The disciples walking to *Emmaus*, and conferring together, presently have Christ fall in with them, who helps them to untie those knots which they were pos'd with. *Cornelius* at duty in his house has a vision from heaven, to direct him in the way he should walk. Take heed Christian, therefore thou neglectest not any one duty; how knowest thou, but that is the door at which Christ stands waiting to enter at into thy soul? The Spirit is free, do not bind him to this or that duty, but wait on him in all. It is not wisdom to let any water run beside thy mill, which may be useful to set thy soul a going heaven-ward. May be Christian, thou find'st little in those duties thou performest, they are empty breasts to thy soul. It is worth thy enquiry, whether there be not some other thou neglectest. Thou hearest the Word with little profit may be, I pray tell me, dost thou not neglect Sacraments? I am sure too many do, and that upon weak grounds God knows. And wilt thou have God meet thee in one Ordinance, who dost not meet him in another? or if thou frequentest all publick Ordinances, is not God a great stranger to thee at home, in thy house and closet? what communion dost thou hold with him in private duties? Here is a hole wide enough to lose all thou gettest in publick, if not timely mended. *Samuel* would not sit down

to the feast with *Jesse* and his sons, till *David*, though the youngest son, was fetcht, who was the only son that was wanting. If thou wouldst have Gods company in any Ordinance, thou must wait on him in all; he will not have any willingly neglected. O fetch back that duty which thou hast sent away, though least in thy eye, yet it may be 'tis that God means to crown with his choicest blessing in thy soul.

2 Sam. 16. 12.

Secondly, in a close and vigorous pursuance of those ends for which God hath appointed them. Now there is a double end which God chiefly aims at in duties of his worship. First, God intends that by them we should do our homage to him as our Sovereign Lord. Secondly, he intends them to be as means through which he may let out himself into the bosomes of his children, and communicate the choicest of his blessings to them. Now here the power of holiness puts forth it self, when the Christian attends narrowly to reach these ends in every duty he performs.

First, God appoints them for this end, that we may do our homage to him as our Sovereign Lord; were there not a worship paid to God, how should we declare, and make it appear that we hold our life and being of him? one of the first things that God taught *Adam* and *Adam* his children, was Divine worship. Now if we will do this holily, we must make it our chief care, so to perform every duty, that by it we may *sanctify his Name* in it, and give him the glory due unto it. A subject may offer a present after such a ridiculous fashion to his Prince, that he may count himself rather scorn'd than honour'd by him. The *souldiers* bowed the knee to Christ, but they mocked him, *Matth. 27. 29.* and so does God reckon many do by him, even while they worship him. By the carriage, and behaviour of our selves in religious duties, we speak what our thoughts are of God himself. He that performs them with a holy awe upon his spirit, and comes to them filled with faith and fear, with joy and trembling, he declares plainly that he believes God to be a great God, and a good God, a glorious Majesty and a gracious; but he that is slightly and slovenly in them, tells God himself to his face, that he hath mean and low thoughts of him. The misbehaviour of a person in religious duties, ariseth from his misapprehensions of God whom he worships. What is engraven on the seal, you shall surely see printed on the wax. And what thoughts the heart hath of God, are stamped on the

11.

the duties the man performs. *Abel* shew'd himself to be a holy man, and *Cain* appear'd a wicked wretch, in their sacrifice; And how? but in this, that *Abel* aim'd at that end which God intends in his worship (the sanctifying his name) which *Cain* minded not at all: As may appear by comparing *Abel's* sacrifice with his, in two particulars.

First, *Abel* is very choice in the matter of his sacrifice, not any of the flock that comes first to hand, but the *firstlings*; neither did he offer the lean of them to God, and save the fat for himself, but gives God the best of the best: But of *Cain's* offering, no such care is recorded to be taken by him, it is only said, that he brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto the Lord: but not a word that it was the first fruit, or best fruit.

Again, *Abel* did not put God off with a beast or two for a sacrifice, but with them gives his heart also. By faith *Abel* offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than *Cain*, Heb. 11. 4. he gave God the inward worship of his soul; and this was it that God took so kindly at his hands, for which he obtain'd a testimony from God himself, that he was righteous; whereas *Cain* thought it enough (if not too much) to give him a little of the fruit of the ground; had the wretch but considered who God was, and what his end in requiring an offering at his hands, he could not have thought rationally, that a handful or two of corn was that which he prized, or lookt at any further, than to be a sign of that inward and spiritual worship, which he expected to come along with the outward Ceremony. But he shewed what base and unworthy thoughts he had of God, and accordingly he dealt with him. O Christians, remember when you engage in any duty of Religion, that you go to do your homage to God, who will be worship'd like himself. Cursed be the deceiver which hath in his sick a male, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my Name is dreadful among the Heathen. This made David so curious about the Temple, which he had in his heart to build, because the Palace was not for man, but the Lord God, 1 Chron. 29. 1. therefore verse 2. he saith, He prepared with all his might for the house of his God. Thus should the gracious soul say, when going to any duty of Religion: 'Tis not man, but the Lord God I am going to minister unto, and therefore I must be serious and solemn, holy and humble, &c.

The second end, God hath appointed divine Ordinances, and religious duties for, is to be a means whereby he may let out himself to his people; and communicate the choicest of his blessings into their bosomes. *Thro* (saith the *Psalmist*, speaking of the mountain of Zion, where the *Temple* stood, the place of Gods worship,) *commanded he the blessing, even life for evermore*, *Psal.* 133. 3. that is, he hath appointed the blessing of life spiritual, grace, and comfort, which at last shall swell into life eternal, to issue and stream thence. The Saints ever drew their water out of these wells. *Their souls shall live that seek the Lord*, *Psal.* 69. 32. and their souls must needs die that seek not God here. The husbandman may as well expect a crop where he never ploughed and sowed; and the trades-man to grow rich, who never opens his shop doors to let customers in, as he to thrive in grace or comfort, that converseth not with the duties of Religion. The great things God doth for his people, are got in communion with him. Now here appears the power of holiness, when a soul makes this his business, which he follows close, and attends to, in duties of Religion, to receive some spiritual advantage from God by them; as a Scholar knowing he is sent to the University to get learning, gives up himself to pursue this, and neglects other things; 'tis not riches or pleasures he looks after, but learning. Thus the gracious soul bestirs him, and flies from one duty to another, as the Bee from flower to flower, to store it self with more and more grace; 'tis not credit and reputation to be thought a great Saint, but to be indeed such, that he takes all this pains for. The Christian is compared to a Merchant man that trades for rich pearls; he is to go to Ordinances, as the Merchant that sails from port to port, not to see places, but to take in his lading, some here, some there. A Christian should be as much ashamed to return empty from his traffique with Ordinances, as the Merchant to come home without his lading. But alas! how little is this look after by many that passe for great professors, who are like some idle persons that come to the Market, not to buy provision, and carry home what they want, but to gaze and look upon what is there to be sold, to no purpose; O my brethren, take heed of this. Idleness is bad any where, but worst in the Market place, where so many are at work before thy eyes, whose care for their souls both addes to thy sinne, and will another day to thy shame.

Doest

Doeſt thou not ſee others grow rich in grace and comfort, by their trading with thoſe Ordinances, from which thou com'eſt away pöör and beggarly? and canſt thou ſee it without bluſſing? if thou haſt but a heart to propound the ſame end to thy ſoul, when thou com'eſt, thou might'ſt ſpeed as well as they. God allows a free trade to all that do value Chriſt, and his grace according to their preciousneſſe. *Ho, every one that is athirſt, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat, yea, come buy wine and milk without money, and without price, Eſay 55. 1.* The Spirit of God ſeems in the judgement of ſome to allude to a cuſtome in maritime Townes, when a ſhip comes with commodities to be ſold, they uſe to cry them about the Town, Oh all that would have ſuch and ſuch Commodities, let them come to the water-ſide, where they are to be had at ſuch a price. Thus Chriſt calls every one that ſees his need of Chriſt, and his graces, to the Ordinances, where theſe are to be freely had of all that come to them, for this very end,

CHAP.



CHAP. VIII.

A third instance wherein the power of holiness must appear, and that is in the Christians worldly employments.

THirdly, the Christian must expresse the power of holiness in his particular calling and worldly employments, that therein he is conversant with. Holiness must be writ upon those, as well as on his religious duties. He that observes the Law of building, is as exact in making a kitchen, as in making a parlour; so by the Law of Christianity, we must be as exact in our worldly business, as in duties of worship. *Be ye holy in all manner of conversation*, 1 Pet. 1. 15. We must not leave our Religion, as some do their Bibles at Church; as in man, the highest faculty (which is reason) guides mans lowest actions, even those which are common to beasts (such are eating, drinking, and sleeping) man doth (that is, should, if he will deserve his own name) exercise these acts as Reason directs, he should shew himself in them a rational creature; so grace that is the highest principle in a Christian, is to steer and guide him in those actions that are common to man, as man. The Christian is not to buy and sell as a meer man, but as a Christian man. Religion is not like that Statesmans gown, which when he went to recreate himself; he would throw off, and say, *There lie Lord Treasurer awhile*; No, where-ever the Christian is, what-ever he is a doing, he must keep his Religion on, I mean do it holily. He must not do that in which he cannot shew himself a Christian. Now the power of holiness puts forth it self in our particular callings these wayes, but take them *conjunctive*, the beauty of holiness appears in the symmetry of all the parts together.

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First, when the Christian is diligent in his particular calling, when God calls us to be Christians, he calls us indeed out of the world, as to our affections, but not out of the world, as to employment. It is true, when *Elisba* was called, he left his plough, and the *Apostles* their nets, but not as they were called to be Saints, but because they were called to office in the Church, (though some in our dayes could find in their hearts to send the officers of the Church to the plough again) but upon how little reason let themselves judge, who finde one trade (if it be well followed, and managed with a full stock) enough to find them work all the week; and sure the Minister, that has to do with, yea, provide for more souls, than they bodies, may find his head and heart as full of work in his calling, from one end of the year, as any of them all; but I am speaking to the private Christian. Thou canst not be holy, if thou beest not diligent in a particular calling. The Law of man counts him a vagrant, that hath not a particular abiding place; and the Word of God counts him a disorderly person that hath not a particular calling, wherein to move and act for Gods glory, and the good of others. *We hear there are some which walk disorderly among you, working not at all*, 2 Thes. 3. 11. God would have his people profitable, like the sheep which doth the very ground good it feeds on. Every one should be the better for a Christian. When *Onesimus* was converted, he became profitable to *Paul* and *Philemon* also; to *Paul* as a Christian, to *Philemon* as a servant; grace made him of a run-away, a diligent servant. An idle professour is a scandalous professour. An idle man does none good, and himself most hurt.

Philemon 11.

2.

Secondly, when he is not only diligent, but for conscience sake. There are many are free enough of their paines in their particular callings, they need no spur; but what fets them on work? Is it conscience, because God commands it? Oh not! then they would be diligent in their general calling also; They would pray as hard as they work, they then would knock off, as well as fall on at Gods command; if conscience were the key that open'd their shop on the week day, it would shut it on the Lords day. When we see a man, like the Hawk, flie after the wolds prey, and will not come to Gods lure, though conscience bid in his name Come off, and wait on thy God in this duty in thy

thy family, that in thy closet, but still goes on his worldly chase; He shews plain enough whose errand he goes on, not of conscience, but his lusts. But if thou wilt walk in the power of holiness, thou must be diligent in thy calling on a religious account; that which makes thee *servant in prayer*, must make thee *not slothful in business*. Thou mayst say, This is the place God hath set me in, I am but his servant in my own shop, and here I must serve him as I would have my prentice or child serve me, yea, much more, for they are not mine so much as I am his.

Thirdly, when he expects the success of his labour from God, and accordingly, if he speeds gives his humble thanks to God. Indeed they go together, he that doth not the one, will not the other. The worldling that goes not through his closet by prayer, into his shop in the morning, when he enters upon his business, no wonder if he returns not at night by his closet, in thankfulness to God. He began without God, it were strange if he should end in him. The spider that spins her web out of her own bowels, dwells in it when she hath done; and men that carry on their enterprizes by their own wit and care, entitle themselves to what they think they have done; they will sooner sacrifice (as they to *their net and drag*) to their own wisdom and industry, than to God; such a wretch I have lately heard of in our dayes, who being by a neighbour excited to thank God for a rich crop of corn he had standing on his ground, atheistically replied; *Thank God? nay, rather thank my dung-cart*. The speech of a dung-hill spirit, more filthy than the muckin his cart; but if thou wilt be a Christian, thou must acknowledge *God in all thy wayes, not leaning to thine own understanding*; and this will direct thee to him, when success crowns thy labours, to crown God with the praise. Jacob laboured as diligently, and took as much pains for the estate he had at last, as another, yet laying the foundation of all in prayer, and expecting the blessing from heaven; *Gen. 28. 20.* he ascribes all that fair estate he at last was possesst of, to the mercy and truth of God, whom he had in his poor state (when with his pilgrim staff, he was travelling to *Padan-Aaran*) engaged by a solemn vow to provide for him, *Gen. 32. 10.*

When the Christian is content with the portion (little or much)

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Job 8.
Habak. 1. 16.

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that God upon his endeavours allots him; not content because he cannot have it otherwise. Necessity was the Heathens School-master to teach contentment; but faith must be the Christians, whereby he acquiesces in the dispositions of Gods providence with a sweet complacency as in the Will of God concerning him. Here is godlinesse in triumph; when the Christian can carve contentment out of Gods providence, whatever the dish is that is set before him; if he gathers little, he lacks not, but is satisfied with his short meal; if he gathers much, he hath nothing over; I mean, not more than his grace can well digest and turn to good nourishment; nothing over, that turns to bad humors of pride and wantonnesse. This was the pitch *Paul* attain'd unto, *Phil. 4. 14. He knew how to abound, and how to want.* Take contentation from godlinesse, and you take one of the best jewels away she wears in her bosom, *Godlinesse with contentment is great gain*; not godlinesse with an estate, but godlinesse with contentment, *1 Tim. 6. 16.*

5.

Fifthly, when the Christians particular calling doth not encroach upon his general. Truly this requires a strong guard: The world is of an encroaching nature; hard it is to converse with it, and not come into bondage to it; as *Hagar* (when *Abraham* shew'd her some respect more than ordinary) began to contest with, yea, crow over her *Mistresse*; so will our worldly employments juggle with our heavenly, if we keep not a strict hand over them. Now the power of holinesse appears here in two things; first, when the Christian suffers not his worldly business to eat up his time for communion with God, but keeps it inviolable from the sacrilegious hands of the world. The Christian may observe (that if he will listen to it) he shall never think of setting about any religious duty, but some excuse or other (to put it off) will present it self to its thoughts; This thing must be just now done, that friend spoken with, or customer waited for; so that (as the *Wise man* saith) *he that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap, Eccl. 1. 4.* so he that will regard what his own sloth, worldly interest, and fleshly part suggests; he shall never pray, meditate, or hold communion with God in any other religious duty; O 'tis sad! when the master must ask the man leave when to eat, and when not; when the Christian must take his orders from the world, when

when to wait on God and when not, whereas Religion should give Law to that. Then holinesse is in its power (as *Sampson* in his strength) when it can snap asunder these excuses that would keep him from his God, as easily as he did his cords of flax: when the Christian can make his way into the presence of God, through the throng of worldly encumbrances; Behold (saith *David*) *I have in my trouble prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver, &c.* 1 Chron. 22. 14. He had ways enough to have disposed of his treasures, if he would have been discouraged from the work; he might have had a fair apology from the Warres he was all his reign involved in, (which were continually draining his *Exchequer*) to have spared this cost. But as *Rome* shew'd her puissance in sending succours to *Spaine*, when *Hannibal* was at her gates; so *David* will shew his zeal for God and his house, by laying aside such vast summes for the building of a Temple in the mid't of the troubles and expences of his Kingdom. He is the Christian indeed that laies aside a good portion of time daily, in the midst of all his worldly occasions for communion with God; whoever he compounds with and pays short, he dares not make bold with God, to serve him by halves. He shall have his time devoted to him, though others are put off with the lesse; like that devout man, who when his time for his devotions came; what company soever he was with, would take his leave of them with this fair excuse, *he had a friend that staid to speak with him* (he meant his God). Secondly, when his worldly employments do not turn the edge of his affections, and leave a bluntness upon his spirit, as to holding communion with God; here is holinesse in the power; as the husband, when he hath been abroad all day, in this company and that, yet none of these makes him love his wife and children the lesse; when he comes home at night he brings his affections to them as entire as when he went out; yea, he is glad he is got from all others to them again. This is a sweet frame of spirit indeed; but alas how hard to keep it? canst thou say, O Christian, after thou hast past a day, amidst thy worldly profits, and been entertain'd with the delight and pleasures which thy full estate affords thee, that thou bring'st thy whole heart to thy

thy Godd with thee, when at night thou returnest into his preſence to wait on him? Thou canſt ſay more than many can, that have ſome good in them. O 'tis hard to converſe with the world all day, and ſhake it off at night, ſo as to be free to enjoy privacy with God. The world does by the Chriſtian, as the little child by the mother; if it cannot keep the mother from going out, then it will cry after her to go with her; if the world cannot keep us from going to religious duties, then it will cry to be taken along with us, and much add to part it and the affections.

4. Fourthly, the Chriſtian muſt expreſſe the power of holineſſe in his carriage and behaviour to others; and they are either within doors, or without.



CHAP. IX.

Of expreſſing the power of holineſſe, in and to our family Relations.

1. **F**irst, to his family relations. Much, though not all of the power of godlineſſe lies within doors, to thoſe that God hath there related us unto. It is in vain to talk of holineſſe, if we can bring no letters teſtimonial from our holy walking with our relations. O 'tis ſad, when they that have reaſon to know us beſt, (by their daily converſe with us) do ſpeak leaſt for our godlineſſe; few ſo impudent as to come naked into the ſtreets; if men have any thing to cover their naughtineſſe, they will put it on when they come abroad. But what art thou within doores? what care and conſcience to diſcharge thy duty to thy neer relations? He is a bad huſband, that hath money to ſpend among company abroad, but none to lay in proviſions to keep his family

mily at home. And can he be a good Christian, that spends all his religion abroad, and leaves none for his nearest relations at home? That is a great zealot among strangers, and little or nothing of God comes from him in his family? yea, it were well, if some that gain the reputation for Christians abroad, did not fall short of others, that pretend not to profession in those moral duties, which they should perform to their relations. There are some, who are great strangers to profession, who yet are loving and kinde in their way to their wives; what kinde of professors then are they, who are dogged and curriish to the wife of their bosomes? who by their tyrannical lording it over them, imbitter their spirit, and make them *cover the Lords Altar with tears and weeping*? There are wives to be found that are not clamorous, peevish, and froward to their husbands, who yet are far from a work of true grace in their hearts, do they then walk as becomes holiness, who trouble the whole house with their violent passions? There are servants who from the authority of a natural conscience, are kept from railing and reviling language, when reproved by their Masters; And shall not grace keep pace with nature? Holy *David* knew very well, how near this part of the Saints duty lies to the very heart of godliness, and therefore when he makes his solemn vow, to walk holily before God, he instanceth in this, as one stage whereon he might eminently discover the graciousness of his spirit, *I will walk within my house with a perfect heart*, Psal. 101. 2. But to instance in a few particulars wherein the power of holiness is to appear as to family relations.

First, in the choice of our relations, such I mean as are eligible. Some are not in our choice. The child cannot choose what father he will have, nor the father what child. But where God allows a liberty, he expects a care.

First, art thou godly, and wantest a service? O take heed, thou shewest thy holiness in the family thou chooseth, and the governours thou put'st thy self under. Enquire more whether it be a healthful air for thy soul within doors, than for thy body without. The very senseless creatures groan to serve the ungodly world, and (if capable of choosing) would count it their liberty to serve the *sons of God*, Rom. 8. 21. And wilt thou voluntarily, when thou mayst prevent it, run thy self under the government of

of such as are ungodly, who art thy self a child of God? 'Tis hard to serve two masters, though much alike in disposition, But impossible to serve those two, a holy God, and a wicked ungodly man or woman, so as to please them both. But, if thou beest under the roof of such a one, forget not thy duty to them, though they do forget their duty to God; possibly thy faithfulness to them, may bring them to enquire after thy God, for thy sake, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did for *Daniels*. No doubt wicked men would take up Religion and the wayes of God more seriously into their consideration, if there were a more heavenly lustre and beauty upon Christians lives in their severall relations to invite them thereunto; sometimes a book is read the sooner for the fairness of the characters, which would have been not much lookt in, if the print had been naught. O how oft do we hear, that the thoughts of Religion are thrown away with scorn by wicked Masters, when their professing servants are, taken false, appear proud and undutiful, slothful or negligent? what then follows, But is this your Religion? God keep me from such a Religion as this. O commend the wayes of God to thy carnal and ungodly Master or Mistris by a clear unblotted conversation in thy place. But withal let me tell thee, if (doing thy utmost in thy place to promote Religion in the family) thou seest that the soil is so cold that there is no visible hope of planting for God, it is time, high time to think of transplanting thy self; for it is to be feared, the place which is so bad to plant in, will not, cannot be very good for thee to grow and thrive in.

Art thou a godly Master? when thou takest a servant into thy house, choose for God as well as thy self. Remember there is work for God to be done by thy servant, as well as thy self; and shall he be fit for thy turn, that is not for his? Thou desirest the work should prosper thy servant takes in hand; doest not? and what ground hast thou from the promise to hope that the work should prosper in his hand, that sinnes all the while he is doing of it? *the plowing of the wicked is sinne*, Prov. 21. 4. A godly servant is a greater blessing than we think on. He can work, and set God on work also for his masters good, *Gen. 24. 12.* O Lord God of my Master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my Master. And sure, he did his

his Master as much service by his prayer, as by his prudence in that journey: if you were but to plant an Orchard, you would get the best fruit-trees, and not cumber your ground with crabs. There's more losse in a gracelesse servant in the house, than a fruitlesse tree in the Orchard. Holy David observed, while he was at *Saul's* Court the mischief of having wicked and ungodly servants, (for with such was that unhappy King so compassed, that David compares his Court to the profane and barbarous Heathens, among whom there was scarce more wickednesse to be found, *Psal. 120. 6. We is mee but I sojourne in Melch, that I dwell in the Tent of Kedar*; that is, among those who were as prodigiously wicked as any there.) And no doubt, but this made this gracious man in his banishment before he came to the Crown (having seen the evil of a disordered house) to resolve what he will do, when God should make him the head of such a royal family, *Psa. 101. 7. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell in my house; he that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight.* He instanceth in those sins, not as if he would spend all his zeal against these, but because he had observ'd them principally to abound in *Saul's* Court, by which he had suffered so much, as you may perceive by *Psa. 120. 2, 3.* *on Aquila* *in 120. 2* *in 120. 3* *in 120. 4* *in 120. 5* *in 120. 6* *in 120. 7* *in 120. 8* *in 120. 9* *in 120. 10* *in 120. 11* *in 120. 12* *in 120. 13* *in 120. 14* *in 120. 15* *in 120. 16* *in 120. 17* *in 120. 18* *in 120. 19* *in 120. 20* *in 120. 21* *in 120. 22* *in 120. 23* *in 120. 24* *in 120. 25* *in 120. 26* *in 120. 27* *in 120. 28* *in 120. 29* *in 120. 30* *in 120. 31* *in 120. 32* *in 120. 33* *in 120. 34* *in 120. 35* *in 120. 36* *in 120. 37* *in 120. 38* *in 120. 39* *in 120. 40* *in 120. 41* *in 120. 42* *in 120. 43* *in 120. 44* *in 120. 45* *in 120. 46* *in 120. 47* *in 120. 48* *in 120. 49* *in 120. 50* *in 120. 51* *in 120. 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necks oves the fins of Saints? but wilt thou run upon them also to break thy things? point not at this man, and that godly woman, saying; they can marry into such a profane family, and lye by the side of a drunkard, swearer, &c. Look to the rule O Christian, if thou wilt keep the power of holiness. That is clear as a Sun-beam writ in the Scripture; *Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers*; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? 2 Cor. 6. 14. and where he gives the Widow leave to marry again, he still remembers to bound this liberty: *to whom she will, only in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 7. 39. Mark that; *in the Lord*, that is, in the Church; all without the faith, are without God in the world. The Lords kindred and family is in the Church; you marry out of the Lord, when you marry out of the Lords kindred; or *in the Lord*, that is, in the fear of the Lord, with his leave and liking. The Parents consent is fit to be had, we all yield; and is not thy heavenly Fathers? And will he ever give his consent thou shouldst bestow thy self on a beast, a sor, an earth-worm? holy man have paid dear for such matches; what a woeful plague was *Dalilah* to *Samson*? and *Michal* none of the greatest comforts to *David*; had he not better have married the poorest Damsel in *Israel*, if godly (though no more with her but the cloaths on her back) than such a fleeing companion, that mock't him for his zeal to his God?

2.

Secondly, in labouring to interest God in our relations. The Christian cannot indeed propagate grace to his child, nor joynure his wife in his holiness, as he may in his lands; yet he must do his utmost to entice God to them. Why did God command *Abraham* that all his house should be circumcised? surely he would have him go as far as he could, to draw them into affinity with, and relation to God. Near relations call for dear affections. Grace doth not teach us to love them less than we did, but to love them better. It turns our love into a spiritual channel, and makes us chiefly desire their eternal good; what singular thing else is in the Christians love above others? Do not the Heathens lay up estates for their children here? are not they careful for their servants backs and bellies, as well as others? yes sure, but your care must exceed theirs. I remember *Augustine*, speaking how highly some commended his fathers cost and ease to educate him, even above his estate, makes this

sad complaint, *cum interea non satageret. Pater, qualis presertim tibi, dimmedos sem desertus, vel potius desertus à cultu à tuâ De-
us ! ubi eras (saith he) my fathers drift is, all that met to train me up for thee ; his project was, that I might be eloquent, an O-
rator, not a Christian. O my brethren, if God be worth your acquaintance is he not worth theirs also, that are so near and dear to you ? one house now holds you, would you not have one hea-
ven receive you ? can you think (without trembling) that those who live together in one family, should, when the house is broken up, by death, go one to hell, another to heaven ? surely you are like to have little joy from them on earth, who you fear shall not meet you in heaven. By *Ejurgum* his Law, the father that gave no learning to his child when young, was to lose that succour which was due from his child to him, in his old age. The righteousness of that Law though I dare not assert, yet this I may say, what he unjustly commanded, God doth most righteously suffer ; that those who do not teach their children their duty to God, lose the honour and reverence which should be paid them by their children ; and so of other relations also.*

Thirdly, take heed thy relations be not a snare to thee, or thou to them. There are such sad families to be found, who do nothing else but lead one another into temptation, by drawing forth each the others corruption, from one end of the year to the other ; what can we call such families, but so many hells above ground ? A man may live with as much safety to his body in a pest-house, as he can there to his soul. And truly the godly are not so far out of danger, but that the Devil may make use of their passions to royl and defile one another. I am sure he is very ambitious to do them a mischief this way, and too often prevails. *Abraham's* fear laid the snare for *Sarah's* wife, who was easily persuaded to dissemble for him, she loved so dearly, *Gen. 12. 23.* And *Rebecca's* vehement affection to *Jacob*, together with the reverence, both her place and grace commanded in *Jacobs* heart, made him of a plain man become the subtle man, to deceive his father and brother ; which, though it was too broad a sin for him at first proposal to *Wallow*, as appears *Gen. 27. 12. I shall seem to him to be a deceiver, and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing ;* yet with a little art used by his mother, we see

the passage was widened, and down it went for all his first streining at it; and yet both godly persons. Look therefore to thy self; that thou dost not bring sin upon thy relations. It would be a heavy affliction to thee, to see thy wife, child or servant sick of the plague, which thou brought'st home to them, or bleeding by a wound which thou unawares gavest them; Alas, better thus, than be infected with sin, wounded with guilt by thy means. And be as careful to antidote thy soul against receiving infection from them, as breathing it on them. Thy love is great to thy wife; O let it not make the apple of temptation the more fair or desirable, when offer'd to thee by her hand. Thou lovest thy self, yea, thy God too little, if her so much as to sin for her sake. Thou art a dutiful wife, but obey in the Lord; take heed of turning the Tables of the *Commandments*, by setting the *seventh* before the *first*. Be sure to save Gods stake, before thou payest thy obedience to thy husband; say to thy soul, Can I keep Gods command in obeying my husbands? in paying of debts, those should be first discharged, which are due by the most, and those the greatest obligations. And so whom thou art deepest bound, God or thy husband, is easie to resolve; thus in all other relations. Go as far with thy relations as thou canst travel in Gods company, and no farther, as thou would'st not leave thy holiness and righteousness behind thee, the losse of which too great, that thou should'st expect they can recompence unto thee.

4.

Fourthly, then holiness is in its power as to our relations, when the Christian is careful to improve the graces of his relations; and get what good from them he can while they are with them; May be thou hast a holy father, a gracious husband or wife; let it be but a servant in the family that is godly, there is good to be got by his gracious conversation, speeches, and holiness like ointment, will betray itself where ever it stays awhile. O Christian, if any such holy person be with thee in the family, observe what such a one in his speeches, duties of worship, behaviour under affliction, recite of mercies, returns of Sabbaths and Ordinances, and such like affords for thy instruction, quickning and promoting in the ways of holiness. The Prophet bade the Widow bring all the vessels she had or could borrow, to catch what should fall from the pot-boyle that she had in the

the house, and therewith pay her debts. 2 Kings 4. 3. Truly, I think it were good counsel to some that complain (or may justly if they do not) how poor and beggerly they are in grace; to make an improvement of that holy oyl of grace, which drops from the lips and lives of their godly relations; set your memories, consciences, hearts and affections, as vessels to receive all the expressions of holiness that come from them; thy memory, let that keep and retain the instructions, reproofs, comforts drawn by them out of the Word; thy conscience, that applies these to thy own soul, till from thence they distil into thy affections and thou becomeest in love more and more with holiness thy own self, from their recommendation of it to thee. It is a sad thing to consider what different use a naughty heart makes of the gifts and graces of the godly, with whom they live (as they sparkle forth) to what an humble sincere one doth. A naughty heart does but envy and malign such a one the more, and instead of getting good, is made worse; whereas the sincere soul he labours to treasure up all for his good. When Joseph told his prophetic dream to his brethren, their envy, which before lay smothering in their breasts, took fire presently, and awhile after flamed forth into that unnatural cruelty practised upon him by them. There was all the use they made of it; but of good Jacob, 'tis said, by way of opposition to them, Gen. 37. 11. *His brethren envied him, but his father observed the saying*; he laid it up for future use, as that which had something of God in it. Thus Christian, do thou by the holy breathings of the Spirit in those thou livest with.

Note the remarkable passages of their gracious conversations, as thou wouldst do the notions of some excellent book, which is not thine own, but lent thee for a time to peruse: Indeed upon these termes, and no surer, do we enjoy our gracious friends and relations. They are but lent us for a while, and improve them, or not improve them, they will be call'd for ere long; And will it be for thy comfort to part with them, before thou hast had a heart to get good by them? It was a solemn speech of that Reverend holy man of God, Mr. Bolton, to his children, when on his death-bed, *I charge you O my children, not to meet me at the great day before Christ's Tribunal in a Christlesse, gracelesse condition.* God keeps an exact account of the means he affords

us for our salvation, and the lives of his holy servants are not of the lowest rank; you shall observe that God is very curious in Scripture, to record the time how long his faithful servants lived on earth; and sure among other reasons, he would have us know, that he means to reckon with those that lived with them, for every year, yea, day and hour they had them among them. They shall know they had a Propheer, a father, husband, that were godly, and that they had them so long, and God will know of them what use they made of them.



CHAP. X.

Of exercising the power of holiness in our carriage to our neighbours without doors.

2. Secondly, thy righteousness to others must not stay within doors, but walk out into the streets, and visit thy neighbours round. Thy behaviour to, and conversation with them must be holy and righteous. In Scripture, *Righteousness*, and living righteously, do oft import the whole duty of the Christian to his neighbour; And so stands distinguished from *Piety*, which hath God for its immediate object; and *sobriety or temperance*, which immediately respects our selves. See them altogether, *Tit. 2. 12.* where, *the grace of God that bringeth salvation, is said to teach us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.* He that would be the death of all these three, needs do no more but stab one of them, no matter which; the life of holiness will run out at any door, here or there, where ever the wound is given. 'Tis true indeed, there is a moral righteousness, which leaves us short of true holiness; but no true holiness that leaves us short of moral righteousness. Though the sensitive soul be found in a beast without the rational, yet the rational

Soul

soul is not found in man without the sensitive. Grace and Evangelical holiness being the higher principle, includes and comprehends the other within it self. This is the dignity and honour due to Christianity, and the principle it layes down in the Gospel, (the enemies of it being judges) that though some who profess it are none of the best, yet they learn not their unrighteousness of it; most true it is what one saith, *No Christian can be bad, except he be an hypocrite*. Either therefore renounce thy baptism, or abominate the thoughts of all unrighteousness; to be sure thou might'st escape better, if thou would'st let the world know thou didst claim no kindred with Christ, before thou practisest such wickedness; some are unresolved where to find *Aristides, Socrates, Cato*, and some few other Heathens, eminent for their moral righteousness, whether in heaven or hell; but, were there ever any that doubted what would become of the unrighteous Christian in the other world? Hell gapes for these above all others; *Know you not* (saith the Apostle) *that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdome of God?* 1 Cor. 6. 9. as if he had said, Sure you have not so far lost the use of your reason, to think that there is any room for such cattel: in these in heaven. And if not the unrighteous, what crevis of hope is left for their salvation, whose unrighteousness hath a thousand times more malignity in it, than any others in the world is capable of? the heathen shall for their unrighteousness be indicted, and condemned as rebels to the Law; so shall the unrighteous Christian also, and that more deeply. But the charge which is incomparably heaviest, and will lay weight upon him far above the other, is, that which the Gospel brings in, That by his unrighteousness he hath been an enemy to the Crosse of Christ, Phil. 3. 18. Indeed, if a man had a mind to shew his despite to the height against Christ and his Crosse, the Devil himself could not help him to expresse it more fully, than to cloath himself with a gaudy profession of the Gospel, and with this wrapt about him, to roul himself in the kennel of sordid base practices of unrighteousness. O how it makes the prophane world blaspheme the Name of Christ, and abhor the very profession of him, when they see any of this filth upon the face of their conversation, who take the Name of Saints to themselves more than others do! what? shall that tongue

lie to man, that even now prayed so earnestly to God? those eyes be sent on lusts or envies errand, that a few moments past thou tookest off the Bible, from reading those sacred Oracles? Those hands in thy neighbours pocket to rob him of his estate, which were not long ago stretcht forth so devoutly to heaven? Those legs carry thee to day into thy shop or market to cheat and cozen, which yesterday thou wentest with to worship God in the publick?

In a word, dost thou think to commune with God, so as by a greater semblance of outward zeal to God in the first Table to obtain a dispensation in point of righteousness to man in the second? Will thy pretended love to God excuse the malice and rancour, which thy heart swells with against thy neighbour? thy devotion to God, disoblige thee from paying thy debts to man? God forbid thou shouldst think so; but if thou dost, *Peters* counsel to *Simon Magus*, is mine to thee, *Repent of this thy wickednesse, and pray God, for perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.* Acts 8. 22. In the Name of God I charge every one that wears Christs livery, to make conscience of this piece of righteousness; as you would not bring upon your heads the vengeance of God for all those blasphemies, which the nakednesse of some professors in this particular, yea, base practices of some hypocrites, have given occasion to be belched out by the ungodly world against Christ and the good ways of holinesse. Now the power of holinesse (as to this particular) will be preserv'd, when these two things are lookt to.

First, when our care is uniform, and equally distributed; to endeavour the performing of one duty we owe to our neighbour as well as another. For we must know, there is a righteousness that (as one saith) runs through every precept, as it were the veins of every Law in the second Table; and calls for obedience due to Parents Natural, Civil, Ecclesiastical, in the fifth Command, our care to preserve our neighbours life in the sixth, chastity in the seventh, estate in the eighth, good name in the ninth. And our desires in their due bounds, against covering what is our neighbours in the tenth. Now as health in the body is preserv'd by keeping the passages of life open, for the spirits freely to move from one part to another (which once obstructed from doing their office in any part, the health of the body is presently in danger.)

so here the spirit and life of holiness is preserved in the Christian, by a holy care and endeavour to keep the heart free and ready to passe from doing one duty he owes his neighbour to another, according to the several walks that are in every command for him to move in.

Secondly, as our care must be uniform; so the motive and spring within that sets us at work, and makes all these moves move, must be Evangelical. The command is a road in which both Heathen, Jew and Christian must be found travelling: How now shall we know the Christian from the other, when Heathen and Jew also walk along with him in the same duty, seem as dutiful children, obedient wives, loyal subjects, loving neighbours, as the Christian himself? Truly if it be not in the motive from which, and end to which he acts, nothing else can do it. Look therefore well to this, or else thou art out of thy way, while thou seemest to be in the road. It is very ordinary for men to wrong Christ, when they do their neighbour right; and this is done when Christ is not interested in the action, and love to him doth not move us thereunto; without this thou mayest go for an honest Heathen, but canst not be a good Christian; suppose a servant were entrusted by his Master to go and pay such a man a sum of money, which he doth, yet not out of any dutiful respect to the command, or love to the person of his Master, but for shame of being taken for a Thief: In this case, the man should have his due, but his Master a great deal of wrong; such wrong do all meer civil persons do the Lord Jesus; They are very exact and righteous in their dealings with their neighbours, but very injurious at the same time to Christ, because they do not this upon his account. This makes love to our neighbour evangelical, and as Christ calls it a *new Commandment*, Joh. 13. when our love to our brother takes fire from his love to us. We cannot in a Gospel sense be said to do the duty of any Commandment, except we first love Christ, and then for his sake do it. *I je love me, keep my Commandments*, Joh. 14. 15. where observe, that as God prefixt his Name before the decalogue; so Christ for the same reason doth his, before the Christians obedience to any

of them, that so they may keep them both at *his* Commandments, and out of *love to him*, who hath brought us out of a worse house of bondage than *Egypt* was to *Israel*.



CHAP. XI.

Contains nine or ten directions towards the helping those that desire to maintain the power of a holy righteous conversation.

3.

THe third thing propounded in handling the point, calls now for our dispatch; and that is to lay down some directions by way of counsel, and to help all those that desire to maintain the power of holiness and righteousness in their daily walking.

SECT. I.

1.

First, be sure thou gettest a good foundation laid, on which may be rear'd the beautiful structure of a holy righteous conversation; and that can be no less than the change of thy heart by the powerful work of Gods sanctifying Spirit in thee. Thou must be righteous and holy, before thou canst live righteously and holily. If the Ship hath not its right make at first, be not equally poys'd according to the Law of that Art, it will never sail trim; and if the heart be not moulded anew by the workmanship of the Spirit, and fashion'd according to the Law of the new creature, in which old things passe away,

and all things become new, the creature will never walk holily; 'tis solid grace in the vessel of the heart that feeds profession in the lamp, holiness is the life, *Matth. 23. 4.* Now this thorough change of thy heart is especially to be looked at in these two things.

First, that there be a change made in thy judgment of, and disposition of heart to sinne; thou hast formerly had such a notion of sinne as hath made it desirable; thou hast looked upon it as Eve did on the forbidden fruit; thou hast thought it pleasant to the eye, good for food, and worth thy choice to be desired of thee; if thou continuest of the same minde, thy teeth will be watering, and heart continually hankering after it; thou mayst possibly be kept from expressing and venting the inward thought of thy heart for awhile; but as two lovers kept asunder by their friends, will one time or other make an escape to each other, so long as their affection is the same it was; so wilt thou to thy lust; and therefore never rest till thou canst say, thou dost as heartily loath and hate sin as ever thou lovedst it before.

Secondly, look that there be such a change in thy judgment and heart, as makes thee take an inward complacency and delight in Christ, and his holy Commands. Then there is little fear of thy degenerating, when thou art tyed to him and his service, by the heart-strings of love and complacency. The Devil findes it no hard work to part him and his duty, that never joy'd, nor took true content in doing of it. He whose calling doth not like him, nor fit his *genius* (as we say) will never excel in it. A Scholar learns more in a week, when he comes to relish learning, and is pleased with its sweet taste, than he did in a month, when he went to School to please his Master, (whom he fear'd) not himself. Observe any person in the thing wherein he takes high content, and he is more careful and curious about that than any other; if his heart be on his Garden, O how neatly it is kept! it shall lie as we say, in print; All the rare roots and slips that can be got for love or money, shall be sought for. Is it beauty that one delights in? How curious and nice is such a one in dressing her self? she hardly knows when she is fine enough. Truly thus it is here, a soul that truly loves Christ, delights in holiness; all his strength is laid out upon them; may he but excel in this one thing, be more holy,

more heavenly; he will give others leave to run before him in any thing else.

SECT. II.

Secondly, be sure to keep thy eye on the right rule thou art to walk by. Every calling hath a rule to go by, peculiar to its self, which requires some study to get an insight into, without which a man will but bungle in his work. No calling hath such a sure Rule and perfect Law to go by, as the Christians; Therefore in earthly professions, and worldly callings, men vary in their way and method, though of the same trade, because there is no such perfect rule, but another may super-adde to it. But the Christian hath one standing rule, the Word of God, *able to make the man of God perfect*; now he that would excel in the power of holiness must study this. *The Physician* he consults with his *Galen*: the *Lawyer* with his *Littleton*; and the *Philosopher* with his *Aristotle*; the *Masters* of these *Arts*. How much more should the Christian with the Word, so as to be determined by that, and drawn by that, more than by a whole teame of arguments from men? *We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth*, saith *Paul*, 2 Cor. 13. 8. O Christian! when credit votes this way, friends and relations that way; when profit bids thee do this, and pleasure that, say as *Jeboashaphat* concerning *Micajah*, *Is there not here a Prophet of the Lord besides, that I may enquire of him?* 1 Kings 22. 7. Is there not the Word of God that I may be concluded by it, rather than by any of these lying Prophets? Now there are three ways that men go contrary to this direction, all of them destructive to the power of holiness; some walk by *no* rule; some by a *false* rule; and a third by the true rule, but *partially*. The first is the *Antinomist* and *Libertine*; the second is the *superstitious* zealot; the third is the *Hypocrite*; beware of all these, except thou meanst to lay the knife to the throat of holiness.

First, take heed thou dost not take away the Rule God sets before thee, with the *Antinomist* and *Libertine*, who say the Law is not a rule to the Christian. These must needs make crooked lines

lines in their lives; that live by rote, and not by rule. I had thought, *Christ* had baptiz'd the *Law*, and Gospeliz'd it, both by preaching it as a rule of holinesse in his Sermons, *Mat.* 5. 27. and by walking in his life by the rule of it, *1 Pet.* 2. 21, 22. That principle therefore may be indited for a murderer of a righteous and holy life, which takes away the rule by which it should be led. This is a subtle way indeed of Satan to surprize the poor creature; if he make the Christian travell or weary of his guide, and once send him away, then it will not be long before he will wander out of heaven-way, and fall into hell-roads. The Apostle tells us of a generation of men, who while they promise themselves liberty, are themselves servants of corruption, *2 Pet.* 2. 19. Truly these methinks look like the men, who slip off the yoke of the command under a pretence of liberty, that soon have a worse yoke on in its room, even the yoke of sin.

Secondly, take heed thou walkest not by a false rule. There is but one true rule, the Word of God, and therefore we may soon know which is a false. *Isaiah* 8. 20. To the Law, and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them. Pretend not to more strictnesse than the Word will vouch; this is to be over-righteous indeed, *Eccles.* 7. 16. Excesse makes a monster, as well as defect; not only he that hath but one hand, but he that hath three, is one. There is a curse scored up for him that adds to, as well as for him that takes from the Words of this book, *Rev.* 22. 18. The Devil hath had of old a design to undermine Scriptural holinesse, by crying up an Apocryphal holinesse. He knows too well, that as the pot by seething over, puts out the fire, and so comes in awhile not to seeth at all; thus by making mens zeal to boyle over into a false pretended holinesse, he is sure to quench all true holinesse, and bring them at last to have no zeal, but prove key-could Atheists. The Pharisee he must seeke out the commands of God with the traditions of men; the Papist (his true son and heire) hath his unwritten verities, holy orders and rules for a more austere life, than ever came into Gods heart to require; and of late the Quakers have borrowed many of their shreds from them both, with which they are very busie to patch up a ridiculous kinde of Religion; which a man cannot possibly take up, till he hath first fore-done his own understanding, and renounced all subjection to

the Word of God. O beware of a will-holiness, and a will-worship; it is a heavy charge God puts in against *Israel*, *Hosea* 8. 14. *Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth Temples.* This may seem strange, forget God, and yet so devout as to build Temples? yes, they built them without warrant from God; God counts himself forgot, when we forget his Word, and keep not close to that. It is laid at *Jeroboams* door as a great sin, that he offered upon the Altar which he made at *Bethel*, in the month which he had devised in his heart, *1 King* 12. 33. he took counsel of his own heart, not of God when and where to offer. A holiness which is the device of our heart, is not the holiness after Gods heart; the curse that falls upon such bold men, is, that while they seek to establish a holiness of their own, they submit not to the true holiness God requires in his Word; God justly gives them over to real unholiness, for pretending to a further holiness than they should: witness those sinks and common shoals of all abominations (religious houses I mean, as they are called by the *Papists*) which being the institutions of men, for want of the salt of a divine warrant to keep them sweet, have run into filthiness and corruption. God will not endure his creature should be a self-mover; it is a greater sin to do what we are not commanded, than not to do what we are commanded by God; as it is in a subject to presume to make Laws of his own head, than not to obey the Law his Prince enacts; by setting up a holiness of our own, we take Gods Mint as it were out of his hand, to whom alone it belongs to stamp what is holy, and what not.

3.

Thirdly, use not the true rule partially; to be partial in practising, is as bad as to be partial in handling of the Law; this made the Priests contemptible, *Mal.* 2. 9. and so will that, the professor to God and man; square the whole frame of thy life by rule, or all is to no purpose. *Divers measures are as an abomination to the Lord*, *Prov.* 20. 10. He is the honest man in his dealings with men, that hath but one measure, (and that according to the Law) which he useth in his Trade. And he is the holy man that useth but one rule for all his actions, and that no other than the Word of God. O how fulsom was the *Jews* hypocrisy to Gods stomach, that durst not go into the judgment-hall, for fear of rendering themselves unclean? *Joh.* 18. but made no scruple of embruing their hands in Christs blood; and the Pharisees, who observed the

rule

rule of the Law strictly, in *tying annise and cummin*, but dispensed with themselves in the *weightier matters of the Law*: O beware of this as thou lovest thy souls life; you would not thank that customer who comes into your shop, and buys a penni-worth of you, but steals from you what is worth a pound, or him that is very punctual in paying a small debt he owes; only that he may get deeper into your book; and at last cheat you of a greater summe. This is horrid wickednesse to comply with the Word in little matters, on a designe that you may covertly wrong God in greater.

SECT. 3.

Thirdly, propound a right end to thy self in thy righteous holy walking, and here be sure thou standst clear off a legal end; do not think by thy righteousness to purchase any thing at Gods hand. Heaven stands not upon sale. *Many. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,* Rom. 6. What God sold to Christ, he gives to us. Christ was the purchaser, believers are but heirs to what he hath bought, and must claim nothing but in his right; by claiming any thing of God for our righteousness, we shut our selves out from having any benefit of his; we cannot be in two places at the same time, if we be found leaning on our own house, we cannot also be found in Christ; *Paul* knew this, and therefore renounceth the one, that he may be entitled to the other, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. It is Satans policy to crack the breast-plate of thy own righteousness, by beating it out further than the mettall will bear. Indeed by trusting in it thou destroyest the very nature of it; thy righteousness becomes unrighteousnesse, and thy holinesse degenerates into wickednesse; what greater impiety than pride? such a pride as rants it over Christ, and alters the method which God himself hath set for saving souls? O soul! if thou wouldst be holy, learn to be humble. They are clasp't together, *Micah.* 6. 8. *What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!* and how he that trusts in his own holinesse, should be said to walk humbly, it cannot enter into our

5.

heart

heart to conceive. God sets not thee to earn heaven by thy holiness, but thereby to shew thy love and thankfulness to Christ that hath earned it for thee. Hence the great Argument Christ useth to provoke his disciples to holiness, is love; *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*. John. 14. As if he had said, You know what I came into the world and am now going out of the world for; both upon your service, for whom I lay down my life, and take it up again, that I may live in heaven to intercede for you; if these, and the blessed fruits you reap from these, be valued by you, love me; and if ye love me, tellise it in keeping my Commandments. That is Gospel-holiness which is bred and fed by this love, when all the Christian doth, is by him offered up as a thanksgiving sacrifice to Christ, *that loved us to death*. Thus the Spouse to Christ, *Cant. 7. 12. I will give thee my loves*; what she means by her loves, she expresseth, *ver. 13. All manner of pleasant fruits, new and old which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved*. In *ver. 18.* she had professed her faith on Christ, and drunk deep of his love, and now to rebound his love in thankfulness, she bestirs her self to entertain him with the pleasant fruits of his own graces, as gathered from a holy conversation, which she doth not lay up to feed her pride, and self-confidence with, but reserves them for her beloved, that he may have the entire praise of them.

SECT. 4.

4.

Fourthly, often look on the perfect pattern which Christ in his own example hath given thee for a holy life. Our hand will be as the Copy is we write after, if we set low examples before us, it cannot be expected we should rise high our selves; and indeed the holiest Saint on earth is too low to be our patterne, because perfection in holiness must be aimed at by the weakest Christian, *2 Cor. 7. 1.* and that is not to be found in the best of Saints in this lower world. *Moses* the meekest man on earth, at a time his spirit is ruffled; and *Peter* the fore-man of the Apostles, doth not always *οὐδὲ ποδοθεν*, *foot is right*, according to the Gospel, *Gal. 2. 14.* and he that would follow him then, is sure to

go out of his way. The good souldier follows his file-leader, not when he runs away, but when he marches after his Captain orderly, 1 Cor. 11. 1. *Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.* The comment must be followed no further than it agrees with the text. The Master doth not only rule the Scholars book for him, but writes him a copy with his own hand. Christs command is our rule, his life our copy; if thou wilt walk holily, thou must not only endeavour to do what Christ commands, but as Christ himself did it; thou must labour to shape every letter in thy Copy, action in life, in a holy imitation of Christ. By holiness we are the very *image of Christ*, Rom. 8. 29. Were present Christ, and hold him forth to all that see us. Now two things go to make a thing the image of another. *First*, likeness. *Secondly*, derivation; it must not only be like it, but this likeness must be deduced, and derived from it; snow and milk are both white alike, yet we cannot say that they are the image one of another, because that likeness they have is not derived either from other. But the picture which is drawn every line by the face of a man, this may properly be call'd the image of that man, after whose likeness it is made. Thus true holiness is that which is derived from Christ, when the soul sets Christ in his Word, and Christ in his example before him, (as one would the person, whose picture he intends to draw) and labours to draw every line in his life by these. Or this is a sweet way indeed to maintain the power of holiness! when thou art tempted to any vanity, set Christ before thy eye in his holy walking; ask thy soul, Am I in this speech, action, company I consort with, like Christ? did he, or would he, if again to live on earth, do as I do? would not he be more choice of his words than I am? did ever such a vain speech drop from his lips? would he delight in such company as I do? spend his time upon such trifles and impertinencies as I do? would he bestow so much cost in pampering of his body, and swallow down his throat at one meal, what would feed many poor creatures ready to starve for want? would he be in every fashion that comes up, though never so ridiculous and offensive? should cards and dice ever have been found in his hands to drive time away? And shall I indulge my self in any thing that would make me unlike Christ? God forbid. We think it enough if we can quote such a good man or great professor to countenance our practice, and so are led into tempra-

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tion.

tion. But Christian, if thy conscience tells thee Christ likes not such doings, away with them, though thou could'st produce the example of the eminentest Saint in the Countrey to favour them. Thou knowest some possibly of great name for profession, that have cast off duties in their families; but did not Christ shew an especial care of the Apostles which lived under him, and were of his family? often praying with them, repeating to them, and further opening what he preach't in publick, keeping the Passéover with them (as his household) according to the Law of that Ordinance, *Exod. 16*. Thou seest some turn their back on the publick assemblies, under a pretence of sinful mixtures there that would defile them: Did our Lord Jesus do thus? was not he in the Temple, and in the Synagogues, holding communion with them in the service of God which was for the substance there preserved, though not without some corruptions crept in among them? O Christian, study Christs life more, and thou wilt soon learn to mend thy own. *Summa Religionis est imitari quem colis*. It is the very summe and top of Religion to be as like the God we worship as may be.

5. Fifthly, walk dependingly on God. The vine is fruitful so long as it hath a pole, or wall to run upon, but without such a help it wou'd soon be trod under foot, and come to nothing; *It is not in man t. direct his own way; Multa bona facit Deus in homine, qua non facit homo; nulla vero facit homo, que non facit Deus ut faciat, Augustinus*. There are many good things that God doth in man, which man has no hand in; but there is no good and holy action that a man does, but God does enable him to do it: As was said of that Grecian Captain, *Parmenio did many exploits without Alexander, but Alexander nothing without Parmenio*. If thou wilt therefore maintain holiness in its power, acknowledge God in all thy ways; and lean not to thine own understanding, *Prov. 3. 5, 6*. He is ready to help them that engage him, but counts himself charg'd with the care of none but such as depend on him. The Christians way to heaven is something like that in our Nation, (called the *Washer*) where the sands (by reason of the seas daily overflowing) do so alter, that the traveller who pass't them safely a moneth ago, cannot without great danger venture again, except he hath his guide with him. Where then he found firm Land, possibly a little after,

after, coming he may meet with a devouring quick-sand. Truly thus the Christian who gets over a duty at one time with some facility, his way smooth and plain before him, at another time may find a temptation in the same duty enough to set him, if he had not help from heaven to carry him safe out of the danger. O Christian, it is not safe for thee to venture one step without thy stay, thy hand of faith leaning on thy beloveds arme: Trust to thy own legs and thou fallest; use thy legs, but trust to his arme, and thou art safe.

SECT. V.

Sixthly, look to thy company, who they are thou consortest with; flee unholy company, as baneful to the power of godliness; be but as careful for thy soul, as thou would'st for thy body; durst thou drink in the same cup, or sit in the same chair with one that hath an infectious disease? And is not sin as catching a disease as the plague it self? Darest thou come where such ill scents are to be taken, as may soon infect thy soul? of all trades it would not do well to have the *Collier* and *Fuller* live together; what one cleanseth, the other will crock and smutch. Thou can'st not be long among unholy ones, but thou wilt hazard the defiling of thy soul, which the holy Spirit hath made pure: and he did not wash thee clean, to runne where thou should'st be made foul; to be sure thou shalt have no help from them to advance thy holinesse; and truly we should not choose that society where we may not hope to make them, or be made our selves better by them. 'Tis observable what the Spirit of God notes concerning *Abraham*, Heb. II. 9. *He sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange Country, dwelling in Tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise.* He is not said to dwell with the Natives of that Land, but with *Isaac and Jacob*, heirs of the same promise with him. *Abraham* did not seek acquaintance with the Heathen; no, he was willing to continue a stranger to them; but he lived with those that were of his own family, and Gods family also. Christians are a company of themselves, *Acts* 4. 23. *Being set at liberty, they went to their own company;* who should believers

6.

joyn themselves to, but believers? as *Paul* said, *have you not a wife man among you, but you must go to Law before unbelievers?* So may I say to thee Christian, is there never a Saint in all the town that thou can't be acquainted with, sit and discourse with, but you must joyn with the profane and ungodly, amongst whom you live? no wonder thy holinesse thrives no better, when thou breathest in wicked company, that is like the East-wind, under which nothing grows and prospers.

7.

Seventhly, get some Christian friend (whom thou mayest trust above others) to be thy faithful Monitor. O that man hath a great help, for the maintaining the power of godlinesse, that has an open-hearted friend, that dare speak his heart to him. A stander by sees more sometimes by a man, than the *Actor* can do by himself, and is more fit to judge of his actions than he of his own; sometimes self-love blinds us in our own cause, that we see not our selves so bad as we are, and sometimes we are over suspicious of the worst by our selves, which makes us appear to our selves worse than we are. Now that thou mayest not deprive thy self of so great help from thy friend, be sure to keep thy heart ready with meeknesse to receive, yea, with thankfulness embrace a reproof from his mouth. Those that cannot bear plain-dealing, hurt themselves most, for by this they seldom hear the truth. He that hath not love enough to give a reproof seasonably to his brother, nor humility enough to bear a reproof from him, is not worthy to be called a Christian; By the first he shews himself a *hater of his brother*, Lev. 19. 17. by the second, he proves himself a scorner, Prov. 9. Holy David professed he would take it as a kindness for the righteous to smite him, yea, as kindly as if he broke a box of precious oyle upon his head, which was amongst the Jews a high expression of love, Psal. 141. 5. And he made his word good; he did not (as the *Papists* do by their holy water) commend it highly, but turn away his face, when it comes to be sprinkled on him. No, *Abigail* and *Nathan* who reproved him, one for his bloody intentions against *Nabal* and his family; the other for his bloody fact upon *Uriah*, they both sped well in their errand. The first prevented the fact intended by her seasonable reproof: the second recovered him out of that dismal snare of murder, wherein he had lain some moneths without coming so faire to himself as to repent of it, for ought that

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we read ; and which is observable , they did not only prevail in the business, but endeared themselves by this their faithfulness to his soul , so unto him, that he takes her to be his wife, and him to be of his most privy counsel to his dying day, 1 *Kings* 1. 27, 32. Truly it is one great reason, why the falls of professors are so frequent in our dayes, and their recoveries so rare or late ; because few in these unloving times are to be found so faithful, as to do this Christian-office of reproof to their brethren ; they will sooner go, and tattle of it to others to their disgrace, than speak of it to themselves for their recovery. Indeed by telling others, we obstruct our way from telling the person himself, with any hope of doing him good. It will be hard to make him believe thou comest to heal his soul, who hast already wounded his name.

SECT. VI.

Eightly, be often seriously thinking how holily and righteously ; you will in a dying hour wish you had lived. They who now think it matters not much, what language drivels from them, what company they walk in, what they busie their time about, how they comport with God in his worship, and with man in their dealings, but live at large, and care not much which end goes foremost ; yea, wonder at the niceness and zeal of others, as if there were no pace would carry them to heaven but the gallop ; when once death comes so near as to be known by its own grim face, and not to report of others, when these poor creatures see they must in earnest into another world without any delay, and their naked souls must return to God that gave them, to hear what interpretation he will put upon the course and tenure of their walking, and accordingly to passe an irrevocable sentence of life or death upon them ; now their thoughts will begin to change, and take up other notions of a righteous and holy life than ever they had before. 'Tis observed among the *Papists*, that many *Cardinals*, and other great ones, who would think their *cowle* and religious habit ill become them in their health, yet are very ambitious to die, and be buried in them, as commonly they

they are. Though this be a soppery in it self, yet it helps us to a norion considerable. They who live wickedly and loosely, yet like a religious habit very well, when to go into another world. As that young gallant said to his swaggering companion, (after they had visited *Ambrose* lying on his dying bed, and saw how comfortably he lay triumphing over death now approaching;) *O that I might live with thee, and dye with Ambrose!* vain wish! would'st thou O man, not reap what thou sowest, and finde what thou layest up with thy own hands, dost thou sowe cockle, and wouldst reap wheat? dost thou fill thy chest with dirt, and expect to finde gold when thou openest it? cheat and gull thy self thou mayest, But thou canst not mock God, who will pay thee in the same coyn at thy death, which thou treasurest up in thy life. There are few so horribly wicked, but the thoughts of death awes them; they dare not fall upon their wicked practices, til' they have got some distance from the thoughts of this. Christian, walk in the company of it every day by serious meditation, and tell me at the weeks end, whether it doth not keep worse company from thee.

9.

Ninthly, improve the Covenant of grace for thy assistance in thy holy course. *Moses* himself had his holiness not from the Law, but Gospel. Those heroick acts, for which he is recorded as one so eminently holy, they are all attributed to his faith, *Heb.* 11. 24, 25. *By faith Moses did this*, and by faith that, to shew from whence he had his strength; now the better to improve the Covenant of grace for this purpose, Consider these three particulars.

First, that God in the Covenant of grace hath promised to furnish and enable his children for a holy life, *Ezek.* 36. 27. *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes.* This is a way that God hath by himself. The mother can take her childe by the hand to lead it, but not put strength into his feeble joynts, to make him go. The Prince can give his Captains a Commission to fight, but not courage to fight. There is a power goes with the promise; hence it is they are called *exceeding great and precious promises*, (because given for this very end) that by these we might be *made partakers of the divine nature*; *2 Pet.* 1. 3. and therefore we are not only prest to holiness from the command, but especially from the promise, *2 Cor.* 7. 1.

Having

Having therefore these promises, (he means to help and encourage us) let us cleanse our selves from all filthinesse of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holinesse in the fear of God. O 'tis good travelling in his company, that promisethto pay our charges all the way; good working for him that promisethto work all our work for us, Phil. 2. 12, 13.

Secondly, God hath laid up in Christ a rich and full treasure of grace to supply thy wants continually, 1 Col. 19. *It pleased the Father that in him should all fulnesse dwell.* Fulnesse, all fulnesse, all fulnesse dwelling; not the fulness of a land-flood, up and down, not the fulnesse of a vessel, to serve his own turn only, but of a fountain that lends its streams to others without streightning or lessening its own store. Indeed 'tis a fulnesse purposely Ministerial, as the Sunne hath not its light for its self, but for the lower world, called therefore *שמש*, because it is the great Minister and servant to hold forth light to the world. Thus Christ is the Sun of righteousness, diffusing his grace into the bosoms of his people. Grace is said to be poured into his lips, to let us know he hath it, not to keep to himself, but to impart, that of his fulnesse we may receive grace for grace.

Thirdly, every child of God hath not only a right to this fulnesse in Christ, but an inward principle (which is faith) whereby he is by the instinct of the new creature taught to suck and draw grace from Christ, as the child doth nourishment in the womb, by the navel string from the mother; and therefore poor soul, if thou wouldst be more holy, believe more, suck more from Christ: Holy David, Psal. 116. affected with the thoughts of Gods gracious providence, in delivering him out of his deeper distresse, takes up (as the best messenger he could send his thanks to heaven by) a strong resolution for a holy life, v. 9. *I will walk before the Lord in the Land of the living*; he would spend his dayes now in Gods service; but lest we should think he was rash, and self-confident, he addes ver. 10. *I believed, therefore have I spoken.* First, he acted his faith on God for strength, and then he promisethto what he will do. Indeed the Christian is a very beggarly creature considered in himself; he is not ashamed to confesse it; what he promisethto expend in any holy duty, is upon the credit of his Saviours purse, who he humbly believes, will bear him out in it with assisting grace.

Tenthly,

Tenthly, fortifie thy self against those discouragements by which Satan, if possible, will divert thee from thy purpose, and make thee lay aside this breast-plate of righteousness and holiness as cumbersome, yea, prejudicial to thy carnal interests: Now the better to arme thee against his assaults of this kinde, I shall instance two or three great objections whereby he scares many from this holy walking, and also lend a little help to wrest the weapons out of thy enemies hand, by preparing an answer to them against he comes.



CHAP. XII.

Wherein the first policy or stratagem of Satan is defeated, which he useth to make the Christian throw away his breast-plate of righteousness, as that which hinders the pleasure of his life.

Assault I.

First, Satan labours to picture a holy righteous life with such an austere, sour face, that the creature may be out of love with it. O saith he, if you mean to be thus precise and holy, then bid adieu to all joy; you at once deprive your selves of all those pleasures which others passe their days so merrily in the embraces of, that are not so strait-laced in their consciences.

How true a charge this is, that Satan lays upon the ways of holiness, we shall now see; And truly he that desires to see the true face of holiness in its native hue and colour, should do well not to trust Satan, or his own carnal heart to draw its picture. I shall deal with this objection; First, by way of concession; there are some pleasures (if they may be so called) that are inconsistent with the power of holiness; whoever will
take

take up a purpose to live righteously, he must shake hands with them, and they are of two sorts.

SECT. I.

First, all such pleasures as are in themselves sinful; godliness will allow no such in thy embraces. And art thou not shrewdly hurt (dost think) to be denied that which would be thy bane to drink? would any think the father cruel, that should charge his child, not to dare so much as taste of any rats-bane? truly I hope, you that have past under the renewing work of the Spirit, can call sin by another name than pleasure. I am sure Saints in former times have not counted themselves tied up; but saved from such pleasures. The bondage lies in serving them, and the liberty of being saved from them, *Ti. 3. 2.* The Apostle bemoans the time, when himself and other Saints were foolish, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures; and he reckons it among the prime benefits they receiv'd by the grace of the Gospel, to be delivered from that vassalage, *v. 5.* But according to his mercy he saved us (how? not by pardoning them only, but) by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghost. However the devil makes poor creatures expect pleasure in sin, and promiseth them great matters of this kind; yet he goes against his conscience, and his own present sense also. He doth not find sin so pleasant a morsel to his own taste, that he should need to commend it upon this account to others, sin's pleasure is like the pleasure which a place in the *West-Indies* affords those that dwell in it; There grows in it most rare luscious fruit, but these dainties are so sauced with the intolerably scorching heat of the Sun by day, and the multitude of a sort of creatures stinging them by night, that they can neither well eat by day, nor sleep by night, to digest their sweet-meats; which made the *Spaniards* call the place *Comfits in hell*; and truly what are the pleasures of sin, but such *comfits in hell*? there is some carnal pleasure they have, which delights a rank sensual palate; but they are serv'd in with the fiery wrath of God, and stinging of a guilty restless conscience; and the fears of the one, with the anguish of the other, are able sure to melt and waste

Ans. . .

away that little joy and pleasure they bring to the sense.

2.

Secondly, there are pleasures which are not in their own nature sinful; such are creature-comforts and delights; The sin lies as to these, not in the using, but in the abusing of them, which is done two ways.

First, when a due measure is not kept in the use of them; he cannot live holily and *righteously* in this present world, that lives not soberly also. Godliness will allow thee to taste of these pleasures as sauce, but not feed on them as meat. The rich mens charge, *James* 5. 5. runs thus, *ye have lived in pleasure on earth*; they lived in pleasures, as if they had lived for them, and could not live without them; when once this wine of creature-contents fumes up to the brain, intoxicates the mans judgment, that he begins to dote of them, and cannot think of parting with them to enjoy better, but cries loth to depart; as those *Jewes* in *Babylon* who (beginning to thrive in that soyl) were very willing to stay there, and lay their bones in *Babylon* for all *Jerusalem*, which they were called to return unto; then truly they are pernicious to the power of holiness. Though a master doth not grutch his servant his meat and drink, yet he will not like it, if when he is to go abroad, his servant be laid up drunk and disabled from waiting on him by his temperance; And a drunken man is as fit to attend on his Master, and do his business for him, as a Christian over-charged with the pleasures of the creature, is to serve his God in any duty of godliness.

Eccles. 3. 7.

Secondly, they are sinful when not rightly timed; fruit eat out of its season is nought. We read of a *time to embrace*, and a *time to forbear*; there are some seasons that the power of holiness calls off, and will not allow, what is lawful at another time. As first, on the Lords day, now all carnal creature-pleasures are out of season. God calls us then to higher delights, he expects we should lay the other aside, and not put our palates out of taste with those lower pleasures, that we may the better relish his heavenly dainties, *Isa.* 58. 13. *If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thy own ways, nor finding thy own pleasure, nor speaking thy own words, then shalt thou delight thy self in the Lord.* Mark, we can neither taste the sweetness of communion with God, nor

pay

pay the honour due to God in sanctifying his day, except we deny our selves in our carnal delights. If a King should at some certain times of the year, invite some of his poor subjects to sit and feast with him at his own royal table, they should exceedingly dishonour their Prince, and wrong themselves, to bring their ordinary mean fire with them to Court. Do glorified Saints in heaven call for any of their carnal delights, or miss them; while they are taken up in heaven praising God and feeding on the joys that flow from the full-eyed vision of God? and doth not God make account he gives you to enjoy heaven in a figure, when he admits you the service of his holy day? Secondly, in days of solemn fasting and prayer, we are then to afflict our souls; and creature-pleasures will sit that work no better, than a silver lace would do a mourning suit. Thirdly, in times of publick calamity in the Church abroad, especially at home; and this a gracious heart cannot but count reasonable that he should deny himself, or at least tie up himself to a very short allowance in his creature-delights, when Christ in his Church lies a bleeding; sympathy is a debt we owe to our fellow Saints, Christ mystical. And truly the cords of others afflictions, will be little felt through our soft downy beds; if we indulge our selves (I mean) to a full enjoyment of our ease, and carnal delights. What child that is merry and pleasant in his own house, and hath a father or mother lying at the same time in great misery at the point of death, (but unknown to him) will not when the doleful news at last comes to him, change his note, yea, mourn that he did not know it sooner, and had not rather have been weeping for, and with his dear relations in the house of mourning, than passing away his time pleasantly at home? Hitherto I have answered by concession, confessing what pleasures the power of a holy and righteous life denies and forbids, and I hope they appear to be no other than such as may without any losse to the believers joy, be fairly dismissed.

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SECT. II.

Ans. 2.

Now in the second place I come to answer by way of negation; though a holy righteous life denies the Christian the pleasures forementioned, yet it doth not deprive him of any true pleasure the creature affords, yea, so far from this, that none doth or can enjoy the sweetnesse of the creature, like the gracious sou that walks in the power of holinesse, as will appear in these two particulars.

First, the gracious person hath a more curious palate, that fits him to taste a further sweetnesse in, and to draw more pleasure from any creature-enjoyment, than an unholy person can do. The sic finds no honey in the same flower from whence the Bee goes laden away; nor can an unholy heart taste that sweetnesse which the Saint doth in a creature; he hath indeed a natural fleshy palate, whereby he relisheth the grosse carnal pleasure the creature affords, and that he makes his whole meal on; but a gracious heart tastes something more; All *Israel* drank of the rock, and that rock was *Christ*, 1 *Corinth.* 10. 4. But did all that tasted the waters natural sweetnesse, taste *Christ* in it? no alas, they were but a few holy souls that had a spiritual palate to do this. *Sampson's* father and mother ate of the honey out of the lions carcase as well as *Sampson*, and may be lik'd the taste of it for honey as well as *Sampson*, yet he took more pleasure sure than they; he tasted the sweetnesse of Gods providence in it, that had delivered him from that very lion that now affords him this honey, *Judg.* 14.

Secondly, the Christian has more true pleasure from the creature than the wicked, as it comes more refined to him than to the other. The unholy wretch sucks dregs and all; dregs of sin, and dregs of wrath, whereas the Christians cup is not thus spiced. First, dregs of sin, the more he hath of the creatures delights given him, the more he sins with them. O 'tis sad to think what work they make in his naughty heart; they are but few for his lusts to kindle upon; away they run with their enjoyments, as the prodigal with his bags, or like hogs in shaking time, no sight is to be had of them, or thought of their

return.

return, as long as they can get any thing abroad, among the delights of the world. None so prodigiously wicked, as those that are fed high with carnal pleasures. They are to the ungodly as the dung and ordure is to the swine, which grows fat by lying in it; so their hearts grow gross and fat, their consciences more stupid, and senseless in sin by them; whereas the comforts and delights that God gives in to a holy soul by the creature, turn to spiritual nourishment to his graces, and draw these forth into exercise, as they do the others lust. Secondly, dregs of wrath; the Israelites had little pleasure from their dainties, when the wrath of God fell upon them, before they could get them down their throats. The sinners feast is no sooner served in, but divine justice is preparing to send up a reckoning after it; and the fearful expectation of this, cannot but spoil the taste of the other. But the gracious soul is entertained upon free cost; no amazing thoughts need discompose his spirit; so as to break his draught, or make him spill any of the comfort of his present enjoyment from the fear of an approaching danger. All is well, the coast is clear, he may say with David, *I will lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou Lord makest me dwell in safety.* Psal. iv. v. last. God will not, all beside cannot break his rest; As the Unicorn heals the waters by dipping his horn in them, that all the beasts may drink without danger, so Christ hath healed creature enjoyments, that there is no death now in the Saints cup.

Psal. 78. 30.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, I answer by way of affirmation. The power of holiness is so far from depriving a man of the joy and pleasure of his life, that there are incomparable delights and pleasures peculiar to the holy life, which the gracious soul finds in the ways of righteousness, enjoys by it self, and no stranger intermeddles with. They lie inward indeed, and therefore the world speaks so wildly and ignorantly concerning them. They will not believe they have such pleasures till they see them; and they shall never see them till they believe them. The Roman souldiers when they entred the Temple, and went into the holy of holies,

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seeing there no image, as they used to have in their own idolatrous Temples, gave our first fathers the ground to worship the clouds. Truly thus, because the pleasures of righteousness and holiness are not so grosse, as to come under the cognizance of the worlds carnal senses, (as their brutish ones do) therefore they laugh at the Saints, as if their joy were but the child of fancy; and that they do but embrace the cloud instead of ~~Flesh~~ her self, a phantastick pleasure for the time. But let such know that they carry in their own bosome, what will help them to think the pleasures of a holy life more real than this. The horriour (I mean) which the guilt of their unholy and unrighteous lives, does sometimes fill their amazed consciences with, though there be no whip on their back, and pain in their flesh, tells them that the peace which results from a good conscience, may as well fill the soul with sweet joy, when no carnal delights contribute to the same. There are three things considered in the nature of a holy righteous life; that are enough to demonstrate it to be the only pleasant life. It is a life from God; it is a life with God; it is the very life of God.

I.

First, it is a life from God, and therefore must needs be pleasant and joyous. Whatever God makes is good and pleasant in its kind. Now life is one of the choicest of Gods works, in so much that the poorest, vilest man, or life in this respect, exceeds the Sun in its meridian glory. To every life God hath appointed a pleasure suitable to its kind; The beasts have a pleasure suitable to the life of beasts, and man much more to his. Now every creature (we know) enjoys the pleasure of its life best, when it is in its right temper; if a beast be sick, it droops and groans, and so does man also; no dainties, sports, or musick please a man that is ill in his health. Now holiness is the due temper of the soul, as health is of the body, and therefore a holy life must needs be a pleasant life. Adam (I hope in Paradise, before sin spoiled his temper) liv'd a pleasant life. When the creature is made holy, then he begins to return to his primitive temper, and with it to his primitive joy and pleasure. Ours men fall out with their outward conditions, and are discontented in their rank and place in the world; but the fault lies more inward. The shoe is straight and good enough, but the foot is crooked that wears it; all would do well, if thou wert well; and thou wilt never be well, till thou art righteous and holy.

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Secondly it is a life with God; a gracious soul he walks in Gods presence, and keeps communion with him. If you would meet a Saint, you know his haunt, what company he keeps, *1 John 1. 3. That ye may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* See the ingenuity of a holy soul; truly our fellowship is with God, we tell you no lie. An unholy heart dares not be thus free, (I warrant you) and tell what company his soul walks with from day to day. We see there's no danger of going among holy men, they will bring you acquainted with no ill company; they'll carry you to God where their great resort lies. And tell me now, must not that man live a pleasant life, that walks with God? Let it be but a man you ride with in a journey, one that loves you well, and is able to entertain you with good and cheerful discourse; doth not the delight you take in his company, strangely, yet sweetly beguile you of the tediousness of the way? O what joy must then God bring with him, to that soul he walks with? *Blessed is the people* (saith the Psalmist) *that know that joyful sound, they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance; in thy Name shall they rejoice all the day.* The sound of the trumpet, which called them to their religious assemblies, is called there *the joyful sound*, because in his worship, God did especially manifest himself to his people. The heaven of heavens is to be where the Lord is; surely then, that which the Saint hath of Gods presence here, is enough to make the Christians life joyous. O Christians, is it not sweet to walk with God, to God? To walk with God here below, by his assisting, comforting presence, to God manifesting himself in all his glory above in heaven? O all you that are for pleasant prospects in your walks, and out of your windows, see here one that the world cannot match; The prospect that a gracious soul hath, walking in the paths of righteousness, he may see God walking with him, as a friend with his friend, and manifesting himself to him, *Psalm 50. v. last*; yea, he hath not only the sweetness of Gods present company with him, but he hath the goodly prospect of heaven before him, whether God is leading him, and in this way of holiness will certainly bring him at last. Whereas the unholy wretch, walking in the company of his lusts, though they sweeten his mouth with a little frothy pleasure at present (that soon is melted off his tongue,

and)

and the taste forgot) yet they shew him the Region of darknesse before him, whether they will bring him, and where they will leave him, to repent of his dear bought pleasures in torments caseless and endlesse.

3.

Thirdly, it is the life of God himself. Read the expression, *Ephes. 4. 18. alienated from the life of God.* That is, the life of godliness; a holy life is the life of God, but how? not only as God is the Author of it, so he is of the beasts life; thus the wicked are not alienated from the life of God, for they have a natural life which God gave them. But the expression carries more in it, and that is this; *The life of God, is as much, as a life like the life which God himself lives.* He is a living God, and his life is a holy life; holiness is the life of his life. Now, I pray friends, do you not think God himself lives a life of pleasure? and what is the pleasure of his life but holiness? He takes pleasure in the graces of his Saints, *Psalms 149. 4. how much more in his own essential holiness*, from whence those beames, which shine so beautifully to his eye in his children, were at first shot? Thou (whoever thou beest) hast an art above God himself, if thou canst fetch any true pleasure out of unholiness, and unrighteousness; and let me tell thee also, it is not the lowest of blasphemies, for thee to charge the way of righteousness and holiness, to be an enemy to true pleasure; for in that thou chargest God himself to want true joy and pleasure, who has no pleasure, if holiness will not yield it. But away with such putrid stuffe as this is. The Devils and damned souls themselves, that hate God with the most perfect hatred of any other, yet they dare not say, they cannot say so. They know God to be glorious and happy, yea, *glorious in holiness*; and the creatures blisse and glory to consist in a participation of that holiness, which makes God himself so blessed and glorious. This Christian, is the utmost that can be said of thy happiness, either here, or in heaven hereafter. That makes thee glorious, which makes God glorious; Thy joy and pleasure is of the same kind, with the pleasure God delights himself in. *Psalms 36. 8. Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.* Mark that phrase, *the river of thy pleasures.* God hath his pleasures, and God gives his Saints to drink of his pleasures. This is the sweet accent of the Saints

Saints pleasures. When a Prince bids his servants carry such a man down into the Cellar, and let him drink of their beere or wine, this is a kindnesse from so great a personage to be valued highly. But for the Prince to set him at his own table, and let him drink of his own wine, this I hope is far more. When God gives a man estate, corne, and wine, and oyle, the comforts of the creature, he entertains the man but in the common Cellar; such as have none but carnal enjoyments, they do but sit with the servants, and in some sensual pleasures, they are but fellow-commoners with the beasts. But when he bestows his grace, beautifies a soul with holinesse, now he prefers the creature the highest it is capable of, he never sends this rich cloathing to any, but he means to set such by him, at his own table with him, in heavens glory.



CHAP. XIII.

Wherein is defeated Satans second wile by which he would cheat the Christian of his breast-plate, presenting it as prejudicial to his worldly profits.

SEcondly, if thou doest not stumble at this stone, the Devil hath another at hand to throw in the way. He is not so unskilful a sower, as to go with one single shot into the field, and therefore expect him, as soon as he hath discharged ore, and mist thee, to let flie at thee with a second; and tell thee, this holy life, and righteous walking, thou had'st best never meddle with it, except

sept thou meimest to undo thy self, and all that depend on thee. Look upon the rich (will be say) and great men in the world, how doest think these heapt together such vast estates, and raised their families to such dignity and grandeur in their places? was it by their righteousness and holinesse? alas! if they had been so strait laced in their consciences, as thou must be (if thou tiest thy self up to the rules of a holy life) they had never came to so good a market for this world as they have done; and if thou wilt thrive with them, thou must do as they have done, throw off this breast-plate of righteousness quite, or unbuckle it, that it may hang loose enough, to turn aside when an advantage is offered, or else you may shut up your shop-windows, and give over your trade, for all you are like to get at the years end.

Ans.

Answer. To defend thee (Christian) against this assault, take these few considerations, from which it will not be hard to draw an answer, that will stop the mouth of this objection.

1. First, consider it is not necessary that thou should'st be rich; but it is necessary thou should'st be holy, if thou meanest to be happy. You may travel to heaven with never a penny in your purse, but not without holinesse in your heart and life also. And wisdom bids thee first attend to that which is of greatest necessity.
2. Secondly, heaven is worth the having, though thou goest poor and ragged, yes, naked thither. There are some in the world, that will accept Gods offer thankfully, may they be admitted into that glorious City, though God doth not bribe them, and toll them along thither with great estates here. And therefore for shame resolve to be holy at all per-adventures. Do not stand indenting with God for that, which if you were actually possesst of, and loved him, you would leave, and throw at your heeles with scorne, rather than part with him.
3. Thirdly, a little of the world will give thee content, if holiness be kept in its power, as few cloaths will serve a haile strong man; and better is the warmth that comes from blood and spirits within, than a load of cloaths without. Better, I trow, the

the content which godlinesse gives the Christian in his poverty, than the content (if there be such a thing in the word) which the rich man hath from his wealth. *Godlinesse with content is great gain.* The holy person is the only contented man in the world. *Paul tells us, he had learnt in whatsoever state he was, to be content,* Phil. 4. 11. but if you ask him, who was his master, that taught him this hard lesson. hee'l tell you, he had it not by sitting at Gamaliels feet, but Christs, ver. 13. *I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me.* What the Philosopher said in a brag, that the holy soul in truth and sobernesse can say through Christ, when he is lowest and poorest, that his heart and his condition are matches. We would count him a happy man, *filio mundi*, that can live of himself without trading or borrowing, or that when he would buy or purchase, hath ready cash for the purpose in his coffers, when he would indulge his fanciful appetite with varieties, hath all within his own pale, what rarities the several elements can afford, and needs not to send abroad to this market and that for provision. Godliness is so rich a continent, that it is able to maintain the Christian of its own growth as I may say, and out of its own store, with all that his gracious heart can desire, without begging at the creatures door, and hazarding unworthily his holinesse to attaine.

Fourthly, consider what a dear bargeine they have, who part with, or pawne their breast-plate of righteousness for the worlds riches, which will appear, First, in the sinne. Secondly, in the heavy curse that treads upon the heeles of that sinne.

First, it is a great sinne, the Devil sure would tempt Christ to no small sin; we finde him, *Luke 4.* laying this golden bait before him, when he *shew'd him all the King domes of the world,* and promised them all unto him, if he would *fall down and worship him.* What was the foul spirits desighe in this demand, but to draw Christ to acknowledge him the Lord of the world, and by worshipping him, to declare that he expected the good things of the world, not from God, but him? Now truly, every one that by unrighteousnesse seeks the worlds pelf, he goes to the Devil for it, and doth worship him (in effect.)

He had as good speak out, and say he acknowledges not God, but the Devil to be Lord of the world, and to have the disposing of it; for he doth, what God interprets so. Now, how much better is it, to have poverry from God, than riches from the Devil? Here is a daring sin with a witness, at one clap to take away Gods Sovereignty, and bestow it upon the Devil, to do what he please with the world.

Secondly, it is a foolish sinne, 1 Tim. 6. 9. *They that will be rich (that is, by right or wrong) fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish lusts;* What greater folly, than to play the thief to acquire that which is a mans own already? if thou bee'st a Saint, all is thine the world hath. *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,* 1 Tim. 4. 8. If riches be good for thee, thou shalt have it, for that is the tenure of temporal promises, and if it be not thought good by God (who is best able to judge) to pay thee the promise in specie, in kinde, then another promise comes in for thy relief, which assures thee thou shalt have more worth, *Hebrewes 13. 5. Let your conversation be without covetousnesse, and be content with such things as you have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* If God hath given thee riches, but calls thee to part with it for his Names sake, then he gives thee his bond upon which thou mayest recover thy losse, with a hundred-fold advantage in this life, besides eternal life in the world to come, Mat. 19. 29. And he is a fooll with a witness, that parts with Gods promises, for any security the Devil can give him.

Thirdly, unrighteous gaine will appear to be a dear bargain, from the heave curse that cleaves unto it. *The curse of God is in the house of the wicked,* Proverbs 3. 33. *But in the house of the righteous there is much treasure,* Proverbs 15. 6. you may come to the righteous man, and finde (possibly) no money in his house, but you are sure to finde a treasure; whereas there is no treasure in the wicked mans house, when much gold and silver is to be found, because the curse of God eats up all his gaines. Gods fork follows the wicked's rake. It is most righteous for him to scatter, what such gather by unrighteousnesse. They are said therefore, to *consult shame to their house, for the stone out of the wall shall cry, and the beame out of the house shall answer it,*

Hab.

Hab. 2. 10. O who, that prizeth the comfort of his life, would though for tunnes of gold, live in a house thus haunted? where the cry of his unrighteousnesse follows him into every roome he goes, and he doth, as it were, hear the stones and beames of his house groaning under the weight of his sinne, that laid them there; yea, so hateful is this sinne to the righteous Lord, that not only they who purse up the gaine thus got, are cursed by him, but also the instruments such use to advance their unrighteous projects. The poore servant that to curry favour with his Master, advanceth his estate by fraud and unrighteousnesse, God threatens to pay him his wages, *Zephany* 1. 9. I will punish those that leap on the threshold, which fill their Masters houses with violence and deceit. This is spoke either of servants standing at the doore to hook in customers they may cheat, or else of great mens officers that came with absolute power into mens houses to take by violence from them what they pleased; These, though their Masters pocketted up the gaine, shall be punished; Their Masters, as the great devourers, and they as their marks to seek and provide prey for them.

P P 3

CHAR.



CHAP. XIV.

Wherein is defeated the third stratagem Satan useth to disarm the Christian of his breast-plate, and that is by scaring him with the contradiction, opposition and feud from the world it brings.

Assault. 3.

T Here is yet a third stumbling-block, which Satan useth to lay in the way of a soul setting forth in this path of righteousness; and that is the contradiction which such a one is sure to meet with from the world. O saith Satan, this is the ready way to bring thee under the lash of every tongue, to lose the love of thy neighbours, and contract the scorn, yea hatred of all thou livest among; and dost thou not desire to live friendly, and peaceably with thy neighbours? can'st thou beare to be hooted at, as Lot was among the Sodomites, and Noah amidst the old world, that were all of another way? This holiness breeds ill blood where ever it comes, own thar, and you bring the worlds fells about your ears presently.

Answer.

Answer. Truly though this be a sorry weak objection in it self, yet where it meets with a soft temper, and disposition tendered with a facility of nature; one in whom love and peaceful inclinations are predominant, it carries weight enough to amount to a dangerous temptation. No doubt Aaron stumbled at this stone in the businesse of the golden calfe. He did not please himself (surely) in the thing; but it was an act meerly complacential to the people, as appears by his apology to Moses, Exod. 32. 22. *Let not the anger of my Lord wax hot; thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief.* As if he had said, I did not know.

know what they would have done to me upon my denial; what I did was to pacifie them; and prevent more trouble from them. There is need we see to be arm'd against this temptation, which that thou mayest be, seriously weigh these two particulars.

1. Thy God (Christian) whom thou servest, commands the tongues, hands, yea, hearts of all men. He can when he pleases (without the least abating in thy holy course) give thee to finde favour in the eyes of those thou most fearest, *Prov. 16. 7. When a mans wayes please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.* Laban in a fury pursues Jacob, but God meets him in the way, and gives him his lesson, how he should carry himself to the good man, *Gen. 31. 24. and v. 29. he doth ingenuously confess to Jacob, what turn'd the winde into a warmer corner, and made him so calme with him, that set out so full of rage, ver. 29. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt, but the God of your Father met me yester-night, &c.* Thank him for nothing; He had power to hurt Jacob, but God would not let him. Mordecai, one would have thought took the readiest way to incur the Kings wrath, by denying Haman that reverence which all were by Royal Command to pay him; but the holy mans conscience would not suffer his knee to bow; and yet we see when that proud favourite had done his worst to be reveng'd on him; he was forced himself to inherit the gallows, intended for Mordecai, and leave Mordecai to succeed him in the Princes favour. Thus God, who hath a key to Kings breasts, on a sudden lockt *Absolvers*'s heart against that cursed *Amalakite*, and open'd it to let this holy man into his roome. O who would be afraid to be conscientious, when God can and doth so admirably provide for his peoples safety, while they keep close to him.

Secondly, suppose thy holy walking stirres up the wrath of ungodly ones against thee; Know, there may be more mercy in their hatred, than in their love. Commonly the Saints get good by the wrath of the wicked against them, not so oft by their favour and friendship; Their displeasure weakens their care; and makes them more accurate; Thus David pray'd God to make his way plaine for him, because of his observing enemies, whereas their friendship too oft layes it asleep, and proves

a snare to draw them into some sinful compliance with them. *Jehoshaphat* was wound in too far by his correspondence with *Ahab*; so hard is it to keep in with God, and wicked men also. *Luther* professeth he would not have *Erasmus* his honour for a world; indeed the friendship he had with, and respect he had from the great ones of the world, made him mealy mouthed in the cause of God. The *Moabites* could not give *Israel* the fall at armes length, but when they closed in alliances with the children of *Israel*, then they were too hard for them; not their curses, but their embraces did them the hurt. Again, we can never lose the love, or incur the wrath of men, upon better, and more advantageous termes, than for keeping our breast-plate of righteousness close to us. First, when we lose for this any love from men, we gain Gods blessing instead of it. *Blessed are ye when all men speak evil of you falsely, for my Names sake, Mat. 5. 11.* Gods blessing is a good roof over our head, to defend us from the storm of mans wrath. O 'tis sad, when a Christian opens the mouths of the wicked, by some unholy action to speak evil of him; no promise will open then its door to hide thee from the storm of their railing tongues; Man reviles, and God frowns; little welcome such a one has, when he returns home to look in to his own conscience, or converse with his God; but when 'tis for thy holiness they hate thee, God is bound by promise to pay thee love for their hatred, blessing for their cursing; and truly that Courtier has little cause to complain, that for a little disrespect from others, that cannot hurt him, is advanced higher in his Princes favour. Secondly, while thy holy walking loseth thee some love from the world, it gains thee the more reverence and honour. They that will not love thee because thou art holy, cannot chuse but fear and reverence thee at the same time, for what they hate thee. Let a Saint comply with the wicked, and remit a little of his holiness to correspond with them, he loses by the hand (as to his interest, I mean in them) for by gaining a little false love, he loses that true honour, which inwardly their consciences paid to his holiness. A Christian walking in the power of holiness, is like *Sampson* in his strength, the wicked fear him, but when he shews an impotent spirit by any undecency in his course to his holy profession; then presently he is taken prisoner by them, and falls under both the lash of their tongue, and scorn of

of their hearts. They can now dance about such a one, and make him their *May-game*, whose holiness even now kept them in awe. It is not poverty, or the baseness of thy outward state in the world, will render thee contemptible, so long as thou keep'st thy breast-plate of righteousness on. There sits Majesty in the brow of holiness though clad in rags. Righteous *David* commands reverence from wicked *Saul*. The King himself does this homage to his poor exiled subject, 1 Sam. 24. 17. He wept, and said to *David*, thou art more righteous than I, *At*, this is as it should be; when carnal men are forced to acknowledge, that they are out-shot by the holy lives of Christians, O Christians, do some singular thing, what the best of your merely civil neighbours cannot do, and you sit sure in the throne of their consciences, even when they throw you out of their hearts and affections; so long as the *Magicians* did something like the miracles *Moses* wrought, they thought themselves as good men as he, but when they were non-plust in the plague of lice, and could not with all their Art produce the like, they acknowledged the finger of God to be in it, Exod. 8. 16. Do no more than carnal men do, and you stand but level with themselves in their opinions of you, yea, they think themselves better than you, because they equal you; who pretend to holiness more than they. It is expected, that every one in the calling he professeth, should more than a little exceed another that is not of that calling, which if he do not, he becomes contemptible.

Qq

CHAP.



CHAP. XV.

Contains two Uses of the point.

VVE come to the Application, in which we shall be the shorter, having sprinkled something of this nature all along as we handled the doctrinal part.

SECT. I.

Use.
I.

First, for Information in two particulars.

First, Are we thus to endeavour the maintaining of the power of holiness? Then sure, there is such a thing as righteousness and unrighteousness, holiness and sinne that opposeth it; yet there is a generation of men that make these things to be meer fancies, as if all the existence they had, were in the melancholy imaginations of some poor-spirited timorous men, who dream of these things, and then are scared with the bug-bears, that their own foolish thoughts represent to them. Hence some among us, have dared to make it their boast and glorying, that they have at last got from under the bondage of that tyrant conscience; they can now do that which we call swearing, lying, yea, what not? without being bearded and checkt by an imperious conscience; Yea, that there is no sinne to any but him that thinks so. These are worse fools than he the *Psalmist* speaks of, *Psalm 14. 1.* He doth but say in his heart, there is no God; but these tell the world what fools they are, and cannot hide their shame. I do not mention these so much to confute them; That were to as little purpose, as to go prove there is a Sun shining in

in a clear day, because a mad frantick man denies it, but rather to affect your hearts with the abominations of the times, ye holy ones of God; O how deep asleep were men, that the enemy could come and sowe such rares as these amongst us! Perhaps they thought such poysonous seed would not grow in our soyle, that hath had so much labour and cost bestowed on it by Christs husbandmen; that such strong delusions would never go down with any that had been used to so pure a Gospel-diet; But alas, we see by wofull experience, that as a plague when it hits into a City that stands in the purest aire, oft rageth more than in another place; so when a spirit of delusion falls upon a people that have enjoy'd most of the Gospel, it grows most prodigious. It makes me even tremble to think what a place of nettles, *England* that hath so long continued (without wrong to any other Church Christ hath in the world) one of his fairest, fruitfulllest garden-plots may at last become, when I see what weeds have sprung up in our days. I have heard that reverend and holy Master *Greenham* should say, he feared rather *Atheisme* than *Popery* would be *Englands* ruine. Had he lived in our dismal dayes, he would have had his fears much encreased. Were there ever more Atheists made and making in *England* since it was acquainted with the Gospel, than in the compasse of a dozen years last past? I have reason to think there were not; when men shall fall so far from profession of the Gospel, and be so blinded, that they cannot know light from darknesse, righteousness from unrighteousnesse, are they not far gone in Atheisme? This is not natural blindnesse; for the Heathen could tell when they did good and evil, and see holinesse from sin, without Scripture light to shew them, *Rom. 2. 14, 15.* no, this blindnesse is a plague of God fallen on them for rebelling against the light when they could see it. And if this plague should grow more common, which God forbid, woe then to *England*.

Secondly, if we be to maintaine the power of holinesse; then surely its impossible; God would not command what he doth not enable his own peculiar people to do? only here you must remember carefully the distinction premised in the opening of the text, between a legal righteousness, and an evangelical righteousness. The latter of which is so farre from being unattain-

able, that there is not a sincere Christian in the world, but is truly holy in this sense; that is, he doth truly desire, conscientiously endeavour (with some successe of his endeavour through divine grace assisting) to walk according to the rule of Gods Word. I confesse all Christs Scholars are not of the same form; all his children are not of the same stature and strength? some foot it more nimbly in the wayes of holinesse than other; yet not a Saint but is endued with a principle of life; that sets him at work for God, and to desire to do more than he is able. As the seed, though little in it self, yet hath in it virtually the bignesse and heighth of a grown tree, towards which it is putting forth with more and more strength of nature as it growes; so in the very first principle of grace planted at conversion, there is perfection of grace contain'd in a sense, that is a disposition putting the creature forth in desires and endeavours after that perfection to which God hath appointed him in Christ Jesus. And therefore Christian, when ever such thoughts of the impossibility of obtaining this holinesse here on earth are suggested to thee, reject them as sent in from Satan, and that on a design to feed thy own distrustful humour (which he knows they will suite too well, as the news of Giants and high walls that the Spies brought to the unbelieving Israelites did them;) and all to weaken thy endeavours after holinesse, which he knows will surely prove him a lyer. Do but strongly resolve to be conscientious in thy endeavours with an eye upon the promise of help, and the work will go on thou needest not fear it? *For the Lord God is a Sunne and a shield, he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly, Psal. 84. 11.* Mark that, *grace and glory*, that is, *grace unto glory*: hee'l still be adding more grace to that thou hast, till thy grace on earth commenceth glory in heaven.

SECT. II.

Viz 2.

Secondly, for Reproof of several sorts of persons.

First,

I.

First, all those who content themselves with their unholy state wherein they are; such is the state of every one by nature. These alas are so far from maintaining the power of holiness, that they are under the power of their lusts; They give law to them, and cut out all their work for them, which they bestow all their time to make up. And is not that a sad life (sirs) which is spent about such filthy beastly work as sinne and unrighteousnesse is? well may the *bond of iniquity*, and the *gall of bitterness* be joyn'd together, *Acts 8. 23.* The Apostle is thought to allude to *Deut. 29. 18.* where all sinne and unrighteousnesse is called a *root that beareth gall and wormwood.* He that plants sin and unholiness, and then thinks to gather any other than bitter fruit for all his labour, pretends to a knowledge beyond God himself, who tells that the natural fruit which grows from this root; is *gall and wormwood*; who would look for musk in a dogges kennel? that thou mayest sooner find there, than any true sweetness and comfort in unholiness. The Devil may possibly for a time sophisticate with his cookery and art, this bitter morsel, so that thou shalt not have the natural state of it upon thy palate: But, as *Abner* said to *Joab*, *2 Sam. 2. 26. knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?* In hell all the sugar will be melted wherein this bitter pill was wrapt; then, if not before, thou wilt have the true relish of that which goes down now so sweetly. O how many are there now in hell cursing their feast and feast-maker too! Do you think it gives any ease to the damned to think what they had for their money? I mean what pleasures, profits, and carnal enjoyments they once had on earth, for which they now pay those unspeakable torments that are upon them, and shall continue for ever without any hope or help? No, it increaseth their pain beyond all our conceit, that they should sel their precious souls so cheap, in a manner for a song, and lose heaven and blessedness, because they would not be holy, which now they learn too late, was it self (however they once thought otherwise) a great part of that blessedness, and now torments them to consider, they put it from them under the notion of a burden and a bondage. But alas, alas! how few thoughts do unholy wretches spend with themselves, in considering what is doing in another world? They see sinners die daily in the prosecution of their lusts, but do no more think what is become of them,

them, (that they are in hell burning and roaring for their sin) then the fish in the river do think what is become of their fellows that were twicht up by their gills from them, even now with the Anglers hook, and cast into the seething pot or frying pan alive: No, as those silly creatures are ready still to nibble and bite at the same hook that struck their fellows; even so are men and women forward to catch at those baits still of sinful pleasures, and wages of unrighteousness, by which so many millions of souls before them have been hooked into hell and damnation.

2. Secondly, those who are as unholy as others, naked to Gods eye, and Satans malice; but to save their credit in the world, weare something like a breast-plate, a counterfeit holiness, which does them this service for the present, they are thought to be what they are not, *verily they have their reward*, and a poor one it is; for the Lords sake consider what you do, and tremble at it; you do the Devil, Gods great enemy, double service, and God double dis-service. As he that comes into the field, and brings deceitful armes with him; he draws his Princes expectation towards him, as one that would do some exploit for him, but means nothing so; yea, he hinders some others that would be faithful to his Prince in that place, where he a traitor now stands; such a one may do his Prince more mischief than many who cowardly stay at home, or rebelliously run over to the enemies side, and tell him plainly what they mean to do. O friends be serious, if you will trade for holiness, let it be for *true holiness*, as it is phrased, *Ephes. 4. 24. put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness*; wherein two phrases are observable; it is called the *new man after God*; that is, according to the likeness of God; such a sculpture on the soul or image, as is drawn after God, as the picture after the face of the man. Again, *true holiness*, or holiness of truth; either respecting the Word, which is the rule of holiness, and then it means a Scripture holiness, not Pharisaical and traditional, or *else* it respects the heart, which is the seat of truth or falsehood; true holiness in this sense is holiness and righteousness in the heart; there must be truth of holiness in the inner parts; many a mans beauty of holiness is but like the beauty of his body; skin deep all on the out-side. Rip the most beauti-

ful body, and that which was so fair without, will be found within when open'd, to have little besides blood, filth, and stench; so this counterfeited holiness when unbowel'd, and inside exposed to view, will appear to have hid within it, nothing but abundance of spiritual impurities and abominations. God (said Paul) to the high Priest, *shall smite thee, thou whited wall*, Acts 23. 3. Thus say I to thee, O Hypocrite, God shall so smite thee thou whited wall, or rather painted Sepulchre, that thy paint without in thy profession, doth not now more dazzle the eyes of others into admiration of thy sanctity, than thy rottenness within (which then shall appear without) will make thee abhorred and loathed of all that see thee.

Thirdly, those who are so far from being holy themselves, that they mock and jeer others for being so. This breast-plate of righteousness is of so base an account with them, that they who wear it in their daily conversation, do make themselves no less ridiculous to them, than if they came forth in a fools coat, or were clad in a dress contrived on purpose to move laughter; when some wretch would set a Saint most at naught, and represent him as an object of greatest scorn; what is the language he wraps him up in? but there goes a holy brother, one of the pure ones. His very holiness is that which he thinks to disgrace him with. This shows a heart extremely wicked; there is a further degree of wickedness appears in mocking holiness in another, then harbouring unholiness in a mans own bosom. That man hath a great antipathy indeed against a dish of meat, who not only himself refuseth to eat of it, but cannot bear the sight of it on anothers trencher without vomiting. O how desperately wicked is that man, with whom the very scent and sight of holiness at such a distance works so strange an effect, as to make him cast up the gall and bitterness of his spirit against it? The Spirit of God bestows the *chair* upon this sort of sinners, and sets them above all their brethren in iniquity, as most deserving the place. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful*, Psal. 1. 1. The scorner here is set as Chair-man at the counsel-Table of sinners; some read the word for scornful, rhetorical mockers. There is indeed a devilish wit that some shew in their mocks at holiness, they take a kind of pride in polishing those darts,

3.

darts, which they shoot against the Saints. The *Septuagint* read it, the *chair of pestilent ones*. Indeed as the Plague is the most mortal among diseases, so is a spirit of scorning among sinners: As few recover out of this sinne, as any whatever besides. The Scripture speaks of this sort of sinners as almost free among the dead; as little hope of doing them good for their souls, as of those for their bodies, who cannot keep the Physick admittred to them, but presently cast it up before it hath any operation on them; and therefore we are even bid to save our physick, and not so much as bestow a reproof on them, lest we have it cast on our faces, *Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee*, Prov. 9. 7. All we can do, is to write, *Lord have mercy on them*, upon their doot. I mean, rather pray for them, than speak to them. There hath of old been this sort of sinners mingled amongst the godly. A mocking *Ishmael* in *Abrahams* family, Gen. 21. 9. And observable it is, what interpretation the Spirit of God makes of his scornful carriage towards his brother, Gal. 4. 29. *As then, he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit; even so it is now*. Pray mark, First, what was the ground of the quarrel; it was this, his brother was *born after the Spirit*; and this, he being born after the flesh, hated. Secondly, observe how the Spirit of God phraseth this his scornful carriage to his brother; it is called persecuting him.

To aggravate the evil of a scornful spirit, and a mocking tongue, which stands for so little a sinne in the worlds account-book (who count none persecutors, but those that draw blood, for Religion) God would have the jeerer and scoffer know among what sort of men he shall be ranked, and tryed at Christs bar, no lesse sinners than persecutors: but this I conceive is not all; this mocking of holinesse is called persecuting, because there is the seed of bloody persecution in it. They who are so free of their tongue to jeer, and shew their teeth in sneering at holinesse, would fasten their teeth also on it if they had power to use their cheek-bone. Lastly, observe this was not barely the crosse disposition of *Ishmaels* personal peevish and froward temper, so to abuse his brother, but it is laid as the charge of all wicked men; as he did persecute his brother, because after the Spirit, *even so it is now*; this mocking spirit runs in a blood; the whole

whole litter are alike; and if any seem more ingenious and favourable to the holy ones of God, we must fetch the reason from some other head than their sinful nature; God rides some of them with a curb bit, who though they open not their hearts to Christ savingly, yet truth is got so far into them by a powerful conviction, that it makes conscience say to them concerning their holy neighbours, what *Pilates* wife by message said to her husband of Christ, *Have thou nothing to do with these just men, for I have suffered much concerning them.* But though there were ever mockers of holiness among the Saints, because there were ever wicked to be their neighbours; yet the Spirit of God prophesieth of a sort of mockers to come upon the stage in the last days, that should differ from the ordinary scoffers that the people of God have been exercised with. And still the last is the worst; you know, those who mock and jeer at holiness, use to be men and women that pretend nothing to Religion themselves; such as walk in an open defiance to God, and wallow in all manner of wickedness. But the Spirit of God tells us of a new gang, that shall mock at holiness under a colour of holiness; they shall be as horribly wicked, some of them, as the worst of the former sort were, but wicked in a mystery. *Epist. Jude. ver. 17, 18.* But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you, there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. But mark, lest we should expect them at the wrong door, and so mistake, thinking they should arise as formerly, from among the common swearers, drunkards, & other notorious sinners among us; he in the next words gives you as clear a character of them, as if they carried their name on their forehead, *v. 19.* *These be they who separate themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit.* Learned Master Perkins reads the words thus, *these be Sell-makers, fleshly, not having the Spirit.* Sell-makers? those that separate themselves? do not our hearts tremble to see the mockers arrows shot out at this window? These are they who pretend more to purity of worship than others, and profess they separate on consciences account, because they cannot suffer themselves so much as touch them that are unclean by joyning with them in holy Ordinances. And they mockers, they fleshly. Truly if the Spirit of God hath not told us this, we should have

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gone last into their tent (as *Laban* did into *Rachels*) as least suspecting that any mocker of holiness could stay there; yea, God forbid that we should lay it in general, as the charge of all who have separated from communion in the publick, many of whom (my conscience tells me) are lovers of holiness, and led (though out of their way) by the tenderness of their consciences, which when God hath better enlightened, will bring them as fast back to their brethren, as now it carrieth them from them. And truly, I think it might give a great lift to the making of them think of a return; if they would but in their sad and serious thoughts consider, how far many of those who went out from us with them are gone; even to mock at the holiness of those from whom once they parted, because they were not holy enough for their company; (God the searcher of hearts knows I speak this with a sad heart) so that were they to come and joyne with us again in some Ordinances, such scandal hath been given by them, that they who durst not joyne with us, ought not, as they are, to be admitted by us. How many of those have you heard of that began with a separation from our assemblies, who mock at Sabbaths, cast off family duties, indeed all prayer in secret by themselves; yea, drink in those cursed opinions, that make them speak scornfully of Christ the Sonne of God himself, and the great truths of the Gospel, which are the foundation of all true holiness: so that now, none are so great an object of their scorn, as those who walk most close to the holy rule of the Gospel: Well Sirs, of what sort soever you are, whether Atheistical mockers at holiness, or such as mock at true holiness in the disguise of a false one, take heed what you do, 'tis as much as your life is worth; *Be not deceived, God will not be mocked*, nor suffer his grace to be mocked in his Saints. You know how dearly that scott did cost them, though but children that spake it to the Prophet, *Go up: thou bald-head, grieve him bald-head*, 2 King. 2. 23. where, they did not only revile him with that nick-name of bald-head, but made a mock and jeere of *Elijah's* rapture into heaven, as if they had said, You would make us believe your Master is gone up to heaven, why do not you go up after him, that we may be rid of both your companies at once? And we need not wonder that these children should rise to such a height of wickedness so soon, if you observe the place where they liv'd at, *Buttel*, which

which was most infamous for Idolatry, and one of the two Cities where *Jeroboam* did set up his calves; 1 *King.* 12. 28. so that this seems but the natural language which they learnt no doubt from their idolatrous parents. God met with *Michal* also for despising her husband, merely upon a religious account, because he shew'd a holy zeal for God, which her proud spirit (as many others since have done) thought it too mean and base for a King to do. Well, what's her punishment? Therefore *Michal the daughter of Saul* had no child unto the day of her death. The service of God was too low for a King in her thoughts, therefore shall none come out of her womb to sit on the Throne, or wear a Crown. It is great wickedness to mock at the calamity of another. *He that mocks the poor, reproacheth his Maker*, Prov. 17. 5. yea, to laugh at and triumph over a Saints sinne is a heavy sinne; so did some sonnes of *Belial*, when *David* fell into that sad temptation of Adultery and Murder; And they are endur'd for blaspheming God upon that account; what then is it to mock one for his holiness? sin carries some cause of shame, and gives naughty hearts an occasion to reproach him they see belmeared with that, which is so inglorious, and unbecoming, especially a Saint. But holiness, this is honourable, and stamps dignity on the person that hath it. It is not only the nobility of the creature, but the honour of the most high God himself; so runs his title of honour, *Who is like thee, glorious in holiness?* Exod. 15. 11. so that none can mock that, but upon the same account, he must mock God infinitely more, because there is infinitely more of that holiness, which he sees at in the creature, to be found in God, than all the creatures, men and Angels, in both worlds have among them; if you would contrive a way how to cast the greatest dishonour upon God, possible, you could not hit on the like to this. The *Romans*, when they would put contempt upon any, and degrade them of their nobility, they commanded that those their Statues and Portraictures, which were set up in the City or Temples to their memory, should all be broken down. Every Saint is a lively image of God; and the more holy, the more like God; when thou therefore put'st scorn on them, and dost for their holiness, now thou touchest Gods honour nearly indeed; with nothing lesse content thee, but thou must desace that image of his, which he hath erected with so much cost in his Saints, on purpose that they

might be a praise to him in the earth? was it such horrible wickednesse in those Heathens, to cast fire into the Sanctuary, and to break down the carved work thereof with axes and hammers? Psal. 74. 6, 7. of which the Church makes her moane, ver. 10. O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy Name for ever? what then is in thy divellish malice, whose rage is spent, not on wood and stones, but the carved work of his Spirit, the grace and holinesse of his living Temples?



CHAP. XVI.

An Exhortation to the Saints in three Branches.

Use 3.

THirdly, it may be for exhortation: to the Saints, in several particulars, I shall only name three, because I have directed myself in the whole discourse chiefly to them.

First, blesse God that hath furnish't thee with this breast-plate; can'st thou do lesse, when thou seest such multitudes on every hand slaine before thy face by the destroyer of souls, for want of this piece to defend their naked breasts against his murdering shot? Had God made thee great and rich in the world, but not holy, he had but given thee stock to trade with for hell: These would have made thee a greater booty for Satan, and only procured in the end a deeper damnation. When an enemy comes before a City that hath no walls nor armes to defend it, truly the richer it is, the worse it fares; when Satan comes to a man that hath much of the world about him, but nothing of God in his soul to defend him, O what miserable work doth he make with such? He takes what he pleaseth, and doth what he will: purse and all the poor wretch hath is at his command: Let a lust

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ask never so unreasonably, he hath not a heart to deny it; though he knows what the gratifying of it will cost him in another world, yet hee'l damne his soul rather than displease his lust. *Hered* throws half his Kingdome at the foot of a wanton wench, if she will ask it; and because that was thought too little by her, hee'l sacrifice his whole Kingdome to his lust; for so much the blood of *John Baptist* may be judg'd to have cost him in this life, being (so wakeful was Divine providence) shortly after turn'd out of his Throne, besides what he pays in the other. But when God made thee a holy man or woman, then he gave thee gates and barres to thy City, thou art now able through his grace to stand on thy defence, and with the continual succours heaven sends thee to withstand all his power. Thou wert once indeed a slave to him; but now he is a servant to thee; that day thou becamest holy, God did set thy foot on the Serpents head; thy lusts were once his strong holds with which he kept thee in awe, and out of which he did come and do thee so much hurt; but now these are out of his hand. O what joy is there in a Town, when the Castle that commanded it, is taken from the enemy? Now poor soul, *Satan* is dislog'd and unkenneled, never more shall he play *Rex* in thy soul as he hath done; in a word, when thou wert made a holy righteous person, then did God begin heaven in thy soul; that day thou wert born again, an heir to heaven was born. And if such acclamations be at the birth of a young Prince, heir to some petty territories; hast not thou more cause that then had'st heavens glory settled on thee in reversion? especially if thou considerest where all thy inheritance lay a little before, that thou could'st lay claime to. *Paul* joynts both together to make his Doxology full, 1 *Col.* 12. 13. giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son. O blessed change! to step out of the Devils dark dungeon, where thou wert kept in chains of sin and unrighteousness, prisoner for hell, into the Kingdome of Christs grace, where thou hast the golden chain of holiness and righteousness put about thy neck as heire apparent to heaven; such honour have all his Saints.

Secondly, look thou keepest thy breast-plate on Christian.

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Need we bid the souldier be careful of his armour, when he goes into the field? can he easily forget to take that with him, or be perswaded to leave it behinde him? yet some have done so, and paid dear for their boldnesse. Better thou endure the weight of thy plate, though a little cumbersome to the flesh, than receive a wound in thy breast for want of it. Let this piece fall off, and thou canst keep none of the other on. If thou allowest thy self in any unholinesse, thy sincerity, that will presently be call'd into question in thy conscience. I confesse we find that Peter, a little after his sad fall in denying of his Master, had the testimony of his uprightnesse: *John 20. 17. Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee;* after Christ had thrice put it to the question, he could confidently vouch his sincerity; but we must know, *First*, that sinne was not a deliberate sinne, the poor man was surprized on a sudden; and *Secondly*, there had intervened his bitter sorrow between his sinne and his profession; and the renewing of his repentance so speedily, conduces much to the clearing of his sincerity to his conscience. But David found it harder work, who sinn'd more deliberately, and lay longer soaking in his guilt, as you may perceive, *Psal. 31. 10.* where he pleads so earnestly, that God would *renew a right spirit in him.*

Again, the Gospel shew will not come on thy foot so long as swell'd with any sinful humor (I mean any unrighteous or unholly practice) will allway'd and purg'd out by repentance. Consider the Gospel in its preparation, Art thou in a fit case to suffer cheerfully for God, or patiently from God as thou art no more than a souldier in a disease sick bed, is to win a hard match; unholinesse renders the soul, as much as sickness doth the body, and indisposeth it to endure any hardship. *O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength before I go hence, and be no more,* *Psa. 39. 13.* David was not yet recovered out of that sin, which had brought him exceeding low, as you may perceive, *v. 10, 11.* And the good man cannot think of dying with any willingnesse, till his heart be in a holier frame; and for the peace of the Gospel, serenity of conscience, and inward joy, alas, all unholinesse is to it as poyson is to the spirits which drinks them up; throw a stone into a brook, and though clear before, it presently is royl'd and muddy. *He will speak peace unto his people, but let them not turn again to folly,* *Psal. 85. 8.* Mark here, what an issue he gives,

gives, *But let them not turn*, and as if he had said, upon their peril be it; if they turn from holy walking to folly, if they turn from speaking peace, to speak war.

Again, by thy negligence in thy holy walking, thou endangerest thy faith which is kept in a good conscience as the jewel in the cabinet; faith is an eye; all sin and unholiness casts a mist before this eye. A holy life to faith, is as a clear air and medium to the eye; we can see furthest in a clear day, thus faith sees furthest into the promise, when it looks through a holy, well ordered conversation; faith is a shield, and when does the souldier drop that out of his hand, but when dangerously wounded? And if faith faile, what will become of hope, which hangs upon faith and draws all her nourishment from her, as the sucking childe doth from the nurse? if faith cannot see a pardon in the promise, then hope cannot look for salvation; if faith cannot lay claime to Son-ship, then hope will not wait for the inheritance; faith tells the soul it hath peace with God, then the soul rejoiceth in the hope of glory, Rom. 5. And now Christian, what hast thou yet left for thy help? wilt thou betake thy self to the Sword of the Spirit? alas, how canst thou wield it, when by thy unholy walking thou hast lamed thy hand of faith that should hold it? This Sword hath two edges, with one it heals, the other it wounds; with one it saves, with the other it damns. O 'tis a dreadful weapon when it strikes with its wounding damning side; and for the other side thou hast nothing to do with it, while in any way of unholiness. Not a kind word in the whole Bible spoken to one sinning. Now poor creature, think and think again, is there any sin worth hazarding all this confusion and mischief, which if thou beest resolved to have it, will inevitably befall thy soul?

Thirdly, be humble when thou art most holy; which way so ever pride works (as thou shalt finde it like the winde, sometimes at one door, sometimes at another) resist it. Nothing more bineful to thy holiness. It turns righteousness into hem-lock, holiness into sin. Never art thou lesse holy, than when puffed up with the conceit of it; when we see a man blown up and swelled with the drop sicke, we can tell his blood is naught and watrish without opening a veine for the tryal. The more pride puffs thee, the lesse pure blood of holiness thou hast running in the

veines.

veines of thy soul. Behold his soul which is lifted up, is not upright, Hab. 2. 4. See an *eccle*, like a signe, is set up at the proud mans door, that all passengers may know a naughty man dwells there: As thou wouldst not therefore, nor only enfeeble the power of holinesse, but also call in question the truth of thy holinesse, take heed of pride; sometimes possibly thou wilt be ready to despise others, and bid them in thy thoughts stand off, as not so holy as thy self; this smells of the *Pharisees*, beware of it. It is the nature of holinesse to deprime our selves, and to give our brethren the advantage in measuring their gifts or graces with our own; In lowliness of minde let each esteeme other better than themselves, Phil. 2. 3. Another time possibly thou mayst finde a spice of the iusticiaries disease hanging about thee, thy heart leaning on thy righteousness, and lifting up thy self into confidence of it, so as to expect thy acceptation with it, and salvation from God for that. Take heed of this, as thou lovest thy life. I may say to thee, as *Constantine* did to *Acerius* the *Novatian*, set then up thy ladder, and go to heaven by thy self, for never any went this way thither; and dost thou think to be the only man that shall appear in heaven purchaser of his own happiness? go first poor-creature, and measure the length of thy ladder, by the extent of the holy Law; and if thou findest it but one round short of that, thou mayst certainly conclude it will leave thee short of heaven; if therefore thou hast beheld (to allude to that in *Job* 31. 27.) thy righteousness, when it hath shined, and thy holinesse walking in its brightness, and thy heart thereby hath been enticed secretly, or thy mouth hath kissed thy hand; know this is a great wickednesse, and in this thou hast deny'd the God above. Thou hast given the highest part of Divine worship unto a creature, the created Son of thy inherent holinesse, which God hath appointed should be given alone to the increated Son of righteousness, the Lord Jesus, the Lord our righteousness. Renounce thy plea (as now thou hast laid it) for life and salvation, or else give thy cause as lost. Now the more effectually to keep down any insurrection of pride from the conceit of thy holinesse, be pleased to take often these soul humbling Considerations into thy serious thoughts.

1.

First, think frequently of the infinite holinesse of God; when men

men stand high, their heads do not grow dizzy till they look down; when men look down upon those that are worse than themselves, or lesse holy than themselves, then their heads turn round; looking up would cure this disease. The most holy men, when once they have fixt their eyes awhile upon Gods holiness, and then looked upon themselves, they have been quite out of love with themselves, and could see nothing but holiness in themselves. After the vision the Prophet had of God sitting on his Throne, and his heavenly Ministers of State, the Seraphims about him covering their faces, and crying, *holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts*; how was this gracious man presently smitten with the sense of his own vileness! they did not more cry up God as holy, than he did cry out upon himself as *unclean*, *Esay 64, 5*. So *Job*, *Now my eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself*, *ch. 42. 5, 6*. Never did the good man more loath himself for the putrid soars of his ulcerous body, when on the dung-hill he sate and scraped himself, than now he did for the impurities of his soul; we see our selves in a dark room, and we think we are fine and clean; but would we compassse our selves with the beams of Gods glorious Majesty and holiness, then the Sun rays would not discover more atomes in the aire, than the holiness of God would convince of sin to be in us. But 'tis the trick of pride not to come where it may be out-shined; it had rather go where it shall be adored, then where it is sure to be put to shame.

Secondly, often meditate of the holiness of mans innocent state. It is true, now if a believer, thou hast a principle of holiness planted in thee; but alas, what is that at present to what thy nature once had? They who saw the *second Table*, and remembered not the first which *Solomon* built, they thought it no doubt a glorious fabrique; But others, whose eyes had seen the stately work and goodly buildings of the other, could not but rejoyce with tears in their eyes, *Exod 3. 12*. *Many of the Priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid, wept with a loud voice*. O it revived the sad thoughts of the sacking of that glorious structure; and so may this little beginnings upon a new foundation of the new Covenant, remind thee with sorrow to think of the ruins; that man in all his glory fell into by Satans policy; 'tis true, in heaven thou shalt have the odds of A-

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dam in Paradise; but thou shalt have many a weary step before thou gettest up that hill; when a man that hath had some thousands a year, hath now but a few pounds *per annum* allowed him, and the rest sequestred from him for thirty or forty years: it is sad, though comfortable also, to think it shall at last return (and may be with a great over-plus) but at present he is put to many straits, and faine to make a hard shift to rub thorrow, so as to live any thing like his noble descent and family. Thus it is joyous to the Saint to think of heaven, when all his means shall come into his hands; but truly his imperfect grace, and the many expences he is at (from afflictions at Gods hands, temptations at Satans mutinies and intestine broiles from remaining lusts within doores) do put him into many sad straits, that the poor soul is fain oft to snap short in his comfort, yea, much ado he hath to keep shop-windows open with the little stock he hath; hence the Christians getting to heaven, is set out as a businesse of so much difficulty. *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* 1 Pet. 4. 18. The wise Virgins had no oyle to spare; the Christian shall hold out, and that is even all. Think of this and let thy plumes fall.

3. Thirdly, often meditate of thy own personal miscarriages, especially in thy unregenerate state. This kept *Paul* so humble; how oft does his unregenerate wicked conversation rise, though not in his conscience to darken his comfort, yet in his mind to qualifie the thoughts of his gifts and grace, 1 Cor. 15. 9, 10. where he speaks how he *laboured more than them all*: O how he way-lays his pride, that possibly might follow such his glorying too close at the heels, and therefore before he dares speak a word of his present holinesse, he bolts the door upon pride, and first falls upon the story of that black part of his life; O how he barters his pride, and speaks himself all to naught! no enemy could have drawn his picture with a blacker coale, v. 7. he calls himself *one born out of time*, ver. 9. *for I am the least of the Apostles, not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God*; and now having sufficiently besmeared and doused himself in the puddle of his former sinnes, how humbly doth the holy man speak of his transcendent graces? v. 10. *By the grace of God, I am that I am, and I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet*

not

not I, but the grace of God. O this is the way of killing this weed of pride, to break up our hearts and turn the inside outward, I mean, humble and abase our selves for our former abominations. Pride will not easily thrive in a soil where this plough often walks. Pride is a worme that bites and gnaws out the heart of grace: Now you know they are bitter things that must break the bag of worms that are gathered in the stomach; all sweet things nourish them; they are bitter that scatter and kill them. O Christian, take some quantity of this *does* often, and with Gods blessing thou shalt finde ease of that, which if a Christian, thou art troubled withal. And do not think, that this worme breeds only in children, weak Christians, and young novices; I confesse it is the most ordinary disease of that age; but aged and stronger Christians are not out of danger. Old *David* had this worm of pride crawling out of his mouth, when he bade *Joab* number the people; And dost not thou too oft take thy self in numbring the duties and good works thou hast done, and the sufferings thou hast endured for thy God, with some secret self-applauding thoughts that tickle thee from them?



VERSE 15.

*And your feet shod with the preparation
of the Gospel of peace.*



His verse presents us with the third piece of armor in the Christians Panoply. A spiritual shoe, fitted to his foot, and to be worn by him, so long as he keeps the field against sinne and Satan. *And your feet shod, &c.* We shall cast the words into distinct questions or enquiries, from the resolution of which, will result the several points to be insisted on.

First, what is meant by the *Gospel*?

Secondly, what by *peace*, and why attributed to the Gospel?

Thirdly, what the feet here mentioned import, and what grace is intended by the *preparation of the Gospel of peace*, which here is compared to the shoe, and fitted for these feet?

Quest. 1. What is meant by the Gospel?

Ans. Gospel, according to the notation of the original word, εὐαγγέλιον, signifies any good news, or joyful message; so Jer. 20. 15. *curst be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, a man-child is born to thee, to make him glad.* Septuagint, ὁ εὐαγγελισάμενος τῷ πατρὶ. But usually in Scripture, it is restrain'd by way of excellency, to signify the doctrine of Christ, and salvation by him to poor sinners. *I bring you glad tidings* (saith the Angel to the shepherds) *of great joy*, Luke 2. 10. And v. 11. he addeth, *unto you is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* Thus 'tis taken in this place, and generally in the New Testament, and affords this Note,



CHAP. I.

Wherein the glad some news that the Gospel brings, is declared from the five particulars, requisite to fill up the joyfulness of a message; with a word to stir up our bowels in pitying those that never heard any of this news.

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Note. The revelation of Christ, and the grace of God through him, is without compare the best news and joyfullest tidings that poor sinners can hear. It is such a message, as no good news

news can come before it, nor no ill news follow. No good news can come before it; no, not from God himself to the creature; He cannot issue out any blessing to poor sinners, till he hath shewn mercy to their souls in Christ. *God be merciful to us, and blesse us, and cause his face to shine upon us, Psal. 67. 1.*

First, God forgives, then he gives; till he be merciful to pardon our sinnes through Christ, he cannot blesse, or look kindly on us sinners. All our enjoyments are but blessings in bullion, till Gospel-grace, pardoning mercy, stamp and make them currant; God cannot so much as bear any good will to us, till Christ makes peace for us; *on earth peace, good will to men*, Luke 2. 14. And what joy can a sinner take, though it were to hear of a Kingdom befallen to him, if he may not have it with Gods good will?

Again, No ill news can come after the glad-tydings of the Gospel, where believingly embraced. Gods mercy in Christ, alters the very property of all evils to the believer. All plagues and judgments that can befall the creature in the world, when baptized in the stream of Gospel-grace, receive a new name, come on a new errand, and have a new taste on the believers palate; as the same water by running through some Mine, gets a tang and a healing vertue, which before it had not: *Esay 32. 24. The inhabitants shall not say I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be pardoned their iniquity. Observe, he doth not say, they shall not be sick; Gospel-grace doth not exempt from afflictions; but they shall not say I am sick. They shall be so ravished with the joy of Gods pardoning mercy, that they shall not complain of being sick; this, or any other crosse is too thin a veil to darken the joy of the other good news. This is so joyful a message which the Gospel brings, that God would not have Adam long without it, but open'd a crevis to let some beams of this light (that is so pleasant to behold) into his soul, amaz'd with the terror of Gods presence; without which, as he was turned out of Paradise, so had he been turned into hell immediately, for such the world would have been to his guilty conscience. This is the news God used to tell his people of (on a design to comfort them and cheer them) when things went worse with them, and their affairs were at the lowest ebbe, *Isa. 7. 14. Micah 5. 5.* This is the great secret which God whispers by his Spirit in the eare of those:*

those only he embraces with his special distinguishing love, *Luke 10. 21. 1 Cor. 2. 12.* so that it is made the sad sign of a soul marked out for hell, to have the *Gospel hid from it*, *2 Cor. 4. 3.* To wind up this in a few words, there meet all the properties of a joyful message in the glad-tydings of the Gospel. *Five* ingredients are desirable in a message, yea, must all conspire to fill up the joyfulness thereof into a redundancy.

First, *It must be good*; none rejoyce to hear evil news: Joy is the dilatation of the heart, whereby it goes forth to meet and welcome in what it desires; and this must needs be some good. Till news is sure to find the heart shut against it, and to come before it is welcome.

Secondly, *It must be some great good*, or else it affects little? affections are stir'd according to the degrees of good or evil in the object presented: A thing we hear may be so inconsiderably, that it is no great oddes how it goes; but if it be good, and that great also, of weighty importance, this causeth proportionable. The greater the bell, the more strength is required to raise it. It must be a great good that raiseth great joy.

Thirdly, *This great good must immediately concern them that hear it*; my meaning is, they must have propriety in it, for though we can rejoyce to hear of some great good befallen another; yet it affects most, when it is emptied into our own bosome. A sick man doth not feel the joy of anothers recovery with the same advantage as he would do his own.

Fourthly, *It would much adde to the joyfulness of the news, if this were inauditum or inexpectatum, unheard of, unlookt for*; when the tydings steals upon us by way of surprize. The further our own ignorance or despair have set us off all thoughts of so great enjoyment, the more joy it brings with it, when we hear the news of it. The joy of a poor swine-herds sonne, who never dreamt of a Crown, would be greater at the news of such a thing conferr'd on him, than he whose birth invited him to look for it, yea promised it him as his inheritance; such a one his heart would stand but level to the place, and therefore could not be so ravish'd with it as another who lay so farre below such a preferment.

Lastly, to fill up the joy of all these, *it is most necessary that the news be true and certaine*, or else all the joy soon leaks out.

What

What great joy would it afford to hear of a Kingdom befallen to a man, and the next day or month, to hear all crost again and prove false? Now, in the glad tydings of the Gospel, all these do most happily meet together, to wind up the joy of the believing soul to the highest pin that the strings of his affections can possibly bear.

First, the news which the Gospel hath in its mouth to tell us poor sinners, is good. It speaks promises, and they are significations of some good intended by God for poor sinners. The Law, that brings ill news to town, threatnings are the *lingua vernacula legis*, it can speak no other language to sinners, but denunciations of evil to come upon them; But the Gospel smiles on poor sinners, and plains the wrinkles that sit on the laws brow, by proclaiming promises.

Secondly, the news the Gospel brings is as great as good. It was that the Angel said, *Luke 2. 10. I bring you tydings of great joy*; great joy it must needs be, because it is all joy. The Lord Christ brings such news in his Gospel, as that he hath left nothing for any after him to adde to it; if there be any good wanting in the tydings of the Gospel, we finde it elsewhere than in God; for in the Covenant of the Gospel, he gives himself through Christ to the believing soul; surely the Apostles Argument will hold, *all things are yours, ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods*, 1 Cor. 3. 22. The Gospel layes our pipes close to the fountain of goodnesse it self, and he sure must have all that is united to him that hath that is all. Can any good news come to the glorified Saints which heaven doth not afford them? In the Gospel we have news of that glory. *Jesus Christ hath brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel*, 2 Tim. 1. 10. The Sun in the firmament discovers only the lower world; *obscurat cælum, dum revelat terram*; O it hides heaven from us, while it shews the earth to us; but the Gospel enlightens both at once. *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. 4. 8.

Thirdly, the Gospel doth not tell us news we are little concern'd in; Not, what God has done for Angels, but for us; *un'o you (saith the Angel) is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord*; If charity made Angels rejoyce for our happinesse, surely then the benefit which is paid in to our nature by it, gives a further pleasure

to our joy at the hearing of it. It were strange that the messenger who only brings the news of some great Empire to be devolved on a person should sing, and the Prince to whom it falls, should not be glad. And, as the Gospels glad-tydings belong to mans nature, not to Angels; so in particular, to thee poor soul, whoever thou art, that embracest Christ in the armes of thy Faith. A Prince is a common good to all his Kingdom; every subject, though never so mean, hath a part in him, and so is Christ to all believers. The promises are so laid, that like a well-drawn picture, they look on all, that look on them by an eye of faith. The Gospels joy is thy joy, that hast but faith to receive it.

4.

Fourthly, the glad-tydings of the Gospel were unheard of, unlookt for by the sonnes of men; such news it brings, as never could have entred into the heart of man to conceive, till God unlockt the cabinet of his own good pleasure, and revealed the counsel of his will, wherein this mysterious price of love to fallen man, lay hid far enough from the prying eye of the most quick-sighted Angel in heaven, much more from man himself, who could read in his own guilty conscience within, and spell from the Covenant without (now broken by him) nothing but his certain doom and damnation. So that the first Gospel-Sermon preach't by God himself to *Adam*, anticipated all thoughts of such a thing intended to him. O who can conceive (but one that hath really felt the terrours of an approaching hell in his despairing soul) how joyous the tydings of Gospel mercy is to a poor soul, dwelling amidst the black thoughts of despair, and bordering on the very marches of the region of utter darknesse? *Story* tells us of a Nobleman of our Nation in *K. Hen. 8.* reign, to whom a pardon was sent a few hours before he should have been beheaded, which (being not at all expected by him) did so transport him that he died for joy. And if the vessel of our nature be so weakly hoopt, that the wine of such an inferiour joy breaks it; how then could it possibly be able to bear the full joy of the Gospel tydings which doth as far exceed this, as the mercy of God doth the mercy of a mortal man, and as the deliverance from an eternal death in hell, doth a deliverance from a temporary death, which is gone before the pain can well be felt.

5.

Fifthly, and lastly, the glad tydings of the Gospel are certainly true.

true. It is no flying Report, cryed up to day, and like to be crost to morrow; not news that is in every ones mouth, but none can tell whence it came, and who the Author of it, we have it from a good hand, God himself, to whom it is impossible to lye, he from Heaven voucheth it, *This is my beloved Son, hear him*, Luk. 9. What were all those Miracles which Christ wrought, but Ratifications of the truth of the Gospel? Those wretches that denied the truth of Christs doctrine, were forced many times to acknowledge the Divinity of his Miracles, which is a pretty piece of nonsense, and declares the absurdity of their unbelief to all the world. The Miracles were to the Gospel, as Seals to a Writing. They could not deny God to be in the Miracles, and yet they could not see him in the Doctrine; as if God would set his Seal to an untruth. Here (Christians) is that which fills up the joy of this good news the Gospel brings; that we may lay our lives upon the truth of it, it will never deceive any that lay the weight of their confidence on it. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. This bridge which the Gospel layes over the gulf of Gods wrath for poor sinners to pass from their sins into the favour of God here, and Kingdom of God hereafter, is supported with no other arches, than the wisdom, power, mercy and faithfulness of God; so that the believing soul needs not fear, till it sees these bowe or break. It is called the *everlasting Gospel*, Rev. 14. 16. When Heaven and Earth go to wrack, not the least *Letter* or tittle of any promise of the Gospel shall be buried in their ruines. *The Word of the Lord endureth for ever, and this is the Word, which by the Gospel is preached to you*, 1 Pet. 1. 25.

Use 1. Pity those that never heard word of this good news: Such there are in the World, whole Nations, with whom the day is not yet broke, but a dismal night of ignorance and barbarism continues to be stretched over them; whose forlorn souls are under a continual massacre from the bloody butcher of Hell; an easie conquest (God knows) that foul fiend makes of them, who layes his cruel Knife to their throats, and meets with no resistance; because he finds them fast asleep in ignorance, utterly destitute of that light which can alone discover a way to escape the hands of this destroyer. What heart (that ever tasted the sweetness of Gospel-grace) trembles not at their deplored state?

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yea, doth not stand astonished at the difference of Gods dispensations to them and us? *Lord, why wilt thou manifest thy self to us, and not to the world?* God pardon the unmercifulness of our hearts, that we can weep no more over them. Truly we do not live so far from the *Moors* and *Indians*; but we may (by not pitying of them, praying for them, and earnest desiring their conversion) besmear our selves with the guilt of their souls blood, which is shed continually by the destroyer of mankind. O how seldom is their miserable condition the companion of our sorrowful thoughts; and their conversion the subject of our prayers and desires? There have been, alas, in the world, more counsels how to ease them of their gold, than enrich them with the treasure of the Gospel: How to get their land, than how to save their souls. But the time is coming, when winning souls will be found more honourable than conquering Nations. Well Christian, though thou canst not impart to them what God hath laid on thy trencher; yet as thou sitst at the Feast of the Gospel, think of those poor souls, and that compassionately, who starve to death for want of that bread, with which thou art fed unto eternal life. There is an opinion which some have lately taken up, that the Heathens may spell Christ out of the Sun, Moon and Stars; these may seem kinder than others have been to them; but I wish it doth not make them more cruel to them in the end. I mean by not praying so heartily for Gospel-light to arise among them; as those must needs do, who believe them under a sad necessity of perishing without it; when a Garison is judged pretty well stored with provision for its defence, it is an occasion, that relief and succour comes the slower to it. And I wish Satan had not such a design against those forlorn souls in this principle; if such a lesson were to be got by the Stars, we should ere this have heard of some that had learn'd it. Indeed I find a Star led the wise men to Christ; but they had a heavenly Preacher to open the Text to them, or else they would never have understood it.

C H A P. II.

A lamentation for the unkind welcome that Gospel-News finds in the World; with two or three sad grounds of fear as to us in this Nation, taken from the present entertainment the Gospel hath among us, with a double Exhortation to the Saints to rejoyce in this joyous Message, and chiefly in this.

SECT. I.

A Sad lamentation may be here taken up, that so good News should have such ill welcom, as the Gospel commonly finds in the world. When the tydings was first told at *Jerusalem*, of a Saviour being born, one would have thought (especially if we consider that the Scripture-reckoning was now out, for the birth of the Messias, and they big with expectation of his coming) that all hearts should have leapt within them for joy at the News, to see their hopes so happily delivered and accomplished; but behold the clean contrary. Christs coming proves matter of trouble and distaste to them; they take the alarm at his birth, as if an enemy, a destroyer (not a Saviour) were landed in their Coast, and as such, *Hered* goes out against him, and makes him flee the Countrey. But possibly, though at present they stumble at the meanness of his Birth and Parentage, yet when the rayes of his Divinity shall shine through his miracles, then they will religiously worship him, whom now they contemn;

Use 2.

when he comes forth into his publick Ministry, opens his Commission, and shews his Authority; yea, with his own blessed lips tells the joyful Message he brings from his Father unto the sons of men; then surely they will dearly love his person, and thankfully embrace, yea, greedily drink in the glad-tydings of salvation which he preacheth to them: No, they persist in their cursed unbelief, and obstinate rejecting of him; though the Scripture, (which they seem'd to adore) bear so full a testimony for Christ, that it accuseth them to their own Consciences, yet they will have none of him. Christ tells them so much; *John 5. 39, 40. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me; And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life; Life they desired, yet will lose it rather, than come to him for it. And is the World now amended? doth Christ in his Gospel meet with any kinder usage at the hands of most? The Note that Christ sings is still the same, Come unto me that you may have life.* The worst hurt Christ does poor souls that come unto him, is to put them into a state of life and salvation; and yet where is the person that likes the offer? O'tis other News that men generally listen after; this makes the Exchange, the Market-place so full, and the Church so thin and empty. Most expect to hear their best News from the World; they look upon the News of the Gospel as foreign, and that which doth not so much concern them (at least at present) 'tis time enough to mind this, when they are going into another World, Alas, the Gospel is not accommodated to their carnal desires, it tells them of no fields and vineyards it hath to give, it invites them not with the gayeties of worldly honours and pleasures; had Christ in his Gospel but gratified the cravings of mens lusts with a few promises for these things (though he had promised less for another world) the news would have gone down better with these Sorts, who had rather hear one prophesie of wine and strong drink, than preach of Heaven it self. Truly, they are but a very few (and those sufficiently jeer'd for their pains) that like the Message of the Gospel so well, as to receive it cordially into their hearts; if any one does but give entertainment to Christ, and it be known, what an alarm does it give to all his carnal Neighbours? who, if they do not presently beset his House (as the Sodomites did Lot) yet set some brand of scorn

foorn upon him; yea, make account they have now reason enough to despise and hate him, how well soever they loved him before. O what will God do with this degenerate age we live in? O *England, England*, I fear some sad judgment or other bodes thee! If such glad-tydings as the Gospel brings be rejected, sad News cannot be far off, I cannot think of less than of a departing Gospel. God never made such a settlement of his Gospel among any people; but he could remove it from them. He comes but upon liking, and will he stay, where he is not welcome? Who will, that hath elsewhere to go? It is high time for the Merchant to pack up and be gone, when few or none will buy; Nay, when instead of buying, they will not suffer him to be quiet in his shop, but throw stones at him, and dirt on his richest commodities. Do we not see the names of Christs faithful Messengers bleeding at this day under the reproaches that stie so thick about their ears? Are not the preciousst truths of the Gospel almost covered with the mire and dirt of errors and blasphemies, which men of corrupt minds (set on work by the Devil himself) have raked out of every filthy puddle and sink of old Hereticks, and thrown on the face of Christ and his Gospel! And where is the hand so kind, as to wipe off that which they throw on? The heart so valiant for the truth, that will stop these foul mouths, from spitting their venom against Christ and his Gospel? If any thing be done of this kind, al s, tis so faintly, that they gather heart by it; Justice is so favourably sprinkled, like a few drops upon fire, that it rather encrease the flame of their rage against the truth, than quencheth it. A Prince calls not home his Ambassadour for every affront that is offered him in the streets; but when he is affronted, and can have no redress for the wrong.

SECT. II.

Object. But some may say, though it cannot be denied that the Gospel hath found very unkind entertainment by many among us, and especially of late years, since a spirit of error hath so sadly prevailed in the land; yet make us not worse than we are. There

Object.

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is, blessed be God, a remnant of gracious souls are yet to be found, to whom Christ is precious; who gladly embrace the message of the Gospel, and weep in secret for the contempt that is cast upon it by men of corrupt minds, and profane hearts; and therefore we hope we are not in such imminent danger of losing the Gospel as your fears suggest.

Ans.

Ans. If there were not such a sprinkling of Saints among us, our case were indeed desperate, *Conclusum esset de nobis*. The shades of that dismal night would quickly be upon us: These are they that have held the Gospel thus long among us. Christ had, as to his Gospel-presence been gone ere this, had not these hung about his legs, and with their strong cries and prayers entreated his stay. But there are a few considerations as to these, which seriously weighed, will not leave us without some tremblings of heart.

I.

First, Consider what little proportion (as to the number I mean) do these that embrace the Gospel, bear with those that continue to reject it; those that desire to keep Christ among us, and those that wish him gone, and would gladly be rid of him. Were it put to the vote, would not they carry it by thousands of thousands, that care not whether we have a Gospel or not? And doth it not prophesie sadly, when the odds is so great? In all the departures of God from a people, there were ever some holy ones mingled amongst the rout of sinners. *Sardis* had her few names which had not defiled their garments; but yet the Candlestick was removed. All that they could get was a promise for themselves in particular, *Rev. 3. 4. They shall walk with me in white*; but no protection for the Church. God can pull down the House, and provide well for his Saints also, that he finds there. A few voyces are easily drown'd in the out-cry of a multitude; a few Pints of wine are hardly tasted in a Tun of water: And a little number of Saints can do sometimes but little to the saving of a wretched people among whom they live; possibly as in a weak body, where the disease hath got the mastery, nature putting forth its *summuu conatum*, its utmost strength, may keep life awhile in the body some dayes or weeks, but cannot long without some help to evacuate the distemper; so a few Saints, shut up in a degenerate age amongst an ungodly Christ-despising people, may a while protogue the judgment, and reprieve a while

while the life of such a people; but if there be no change made upon them for the better, ruine must needs break in upon them.

Secondly, Consider of these few gracious ones found amongst us, that embrace the Gospel; How many are new Converts, such I mean, as the Gospel hath of late dayes won to Christ? I am afraid you will find this little number of Saints chiefly to consist of old Disciples, such as were wrought upon many years since. Alas, the womb of the Gospel hath been in a great measure shut up of late, as to the bringing forth of souls by a thorow solid work of conversion. Indeed, if they may pass for Converts, that baptize themselves into a new way and form of worship, or that begin their Religion with a tender and an opinion; we have more than a good many to shew of these; but in this old age of *Englands* withered profession, how great a Rarity is a sincere Convert? We cannot deny, but God is graciously pleased to bring the pangs of the new birth now and then upon some poor souls in our Assemblies (that his despised servants may have his seal to confirm their Ministry, and stop those mouths which are so scornfully open'd against it;) yea, alas, it is but here and there one; and doth not this prophesie sadly to this Nation? I am sure, when we see a Tree that used to stand thick with Fruit, now bring forth but little, may be an apple on this bough, and another on that, we look upon it as a dying Tree. *Leah* comforted her self from her fruitfulness, *That therefore her husband would love her, and cleave to her*, Gen. 29. 34. May we not on the contrary fear, that God will not love, but leave a people when they grow barren under the means of grace? God threatens as much, *Jer. 6. 8. Be instructed O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; and if Gods soul departs, then he is upon his remove, as to his visible presence also; so indeed it follows, Lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.* O my Brethren, those golden dayes of the Gospel are over, when Converts came flying as a Cloud, as the Doves to their windows in flocks. Now Gospel-news grows stale, few are taken with it. Though a Kingdom hath much treasure and riches in it; yet if trade cease, no new bullion comes in, nor Merchandize be imported; it spends upon its old stock, and must needs in time decay; our old store of Saints (the treasure of their times) wears away apace; what will become of us, if no new ones

ones come in their room ? Alas, when our buials are more than our births, we must needs be on the losing hand. There is a sad List of holy Names taken away from us ; but where are they, which are born to God ? If the good go, and those which are left continue bad ; yea, become worse and worse, we have reason to fear that God is clearing the ground, and making way for a judgment.

3.

Thirdly, Consider the unhappy contentions and divisions that are found among the people of God, yet left upon the place ; these prophesie sadly the Lord knows. Contentions ever portended ill. The remarkable departures of God (recorded in Scripture) from the *Church* of the *Jews*, found them wofully divided and crumbled into parties. And the *Asian* Churches no less. Christ sets up the light of his Gospel to walk and work by, not to fight and wrangle ; and therefore it were no wonder at all, if he should put it out, and so end the dispute : If these storms, which have been of late years upon us (and are not yet off) had but made Christians, as that did the Disciples, *Mark* 6. 48. ply their Oar, and lovingly row all one way, it had been happy ; we might then have expected Christ to come walking towards us in mercy, and help us safe to land ; but when we throw away the Oar, and fall a scuffling in the ship, while the wind continues loud about us, truly we are more like to drive Christ from us, than invite him to us ; we are in a more probable way of sinking, than saving the ship and our selves in it.

SECT. III.

Use 3.

Use 3. A word of Exhortation, and first to you who yet have not closed with the terms of the Gospel ; be perswaded to receive the message of the Gospel kindly, believingly into your hearts ; 'Tis the best news you can send back to Heaven, as a gratulatory return for the glad-tydings that the Gospel brings from thence. Thy embracing Christ preach't to thee in the Gospel, will be as welcom news to Heaven (I can tell thee) as the tydings of Christ and salvation through him can be to thee. *There is joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner.* Heaven soon rings of this. The *Angels* that sang Christ into the World, will not want a Song when he

he is received into thy heart, for he came into the world for this end. Christ descended when he came into the world, but now he ascends: That was an act of his humiliation, this of his exaltation. The highest created Throne that God can sit in, is the soul of a believer; no wonder then, that Christ calls all his friends to joy with him at a souls return to him and reception of him, *Luke 15. 9.* What joy is now in heaven upon this occasion, we may collect from the joy it drew from Christ when on earth. It was some great good news that could wring a smile then from Christ, or tune his Spirit into a joyful note, who was a man of sorrows, and indeed came into the world to be so; yet when his disciples (whom he had sent forth to preach the Gospel) returned with news of some victorious successe of their labours. *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit, and said, I thank thee O Father, Luke 10. 21.* of all the houres of his life, that is the hour, wherein Christ would expresse his joy, which (with the care of the Spirit to record this passage in the History of Christs life) shews, that Christ had an especial designe in that expression of his joy at that time; and what could it be, but to let us know, how much his heart was set upon this work of saving souls? and that when he should be gone to heaven, if we meant to send any joyful news to him thither, it should be of the prosperous and victorious successe the Gospel hath over our hearts. This, this which could make him rejoyce in the midst of all his sorrows here on earth, must needs be more joyous to him in heaven, now where he hath no bitternesse from his own sufferings (which are all healed, past and gone) to mingle with the joy of this news; And, if the kinde reception of the Gospel, be such joyful news to him; you may easily conceive, how distastful the rejecting of it is to him. As he rejoiced in Spirit to hear the Gospel prevail'd, so he cannot but be angry, when it meets with a repulse from the unbelieving world, *Luke 14. 21.* we finde the *Master of the house* (that is Christ) *angry*, when his servants sent to invite his guests (that is, preach the Gospel) return with a denial from those that were bidden, for so their mannerly excuses were interpreted by Christ, yea so angry that he claps a fearful doome upon them; *not one of those invited shall taste of my supper.* God can least he many contempt cast upon his grace. The Jews though they had many

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grievous calamities beset them for their idolatries and other sins, yet never any like that, which the rejecting Christ brought upon them; under those they relented; but under this they hardened. They would not come when the supper was on the table, and therefore the cloath is drawn, and they go supperlesse to bed, and die in their sinnes; while they shut the door of their hearts against Christ, this padlock (as I may so call it) of judicary impenitence is fastened to it. Christ needs take no other revenge on a soul for its refusing him, to make it miserable, so the height, than to condemn such a one to have its own desire; Christ thou wilt not, Christ therefore thou shalt not have. O unhappy soul thou! that hast offers of Christ, but diest without Christ? Thou goest with thy full lading to damnation; none sink so deep in hell, as those that fall into it, with a fluster at Christ. That Gospel which brings now good news, will, when thou shalt have a repetition Sermon of it at the great day, bring the heaviest tydings with it that ever thy ears heard.

SECT. IV.

2. Secondly, to you who have entertain'd the message of the Gospel.

1. First, rejoyce at the news, glad tydings, and sad hearts, do not well together: when we see one heavie and sorrowful; we ask him, what ill newes he hath heard. Christian, what ill news hath Christ brought from heaven with him, that makes thee walk with thy folded armes and pensive countenance? *Psal. 132. 16.* To see a wicked man merry and jocular, or a Christian sad and dumphish, is alike uncomely. *A feast is made for laughter, saith Solomon, Eccles. 10. 19.* I am sure God intended his peoples joy in the feast of the Gospel; Mourners were not to sit at Gods table. *Deut. 26.* Truly the Saints heaviness reflects unkindly upon God himself; we do not commend his cheere, if it doth not cheare us. What saith the world? The Christians life is but a melancholy walk, sure thinks the carnal wretch, it is a dry feast, they sit at, where so little wine of joy is drunk. And wilt thou confirm them

in this their opinion, Christian? shall they have thy example to produce against Christ and his Word, which promise peace and joy to all that will come to this feast? O God forbid, that thy conversation, wherein thou art to hold forth the Word of life, to live in the eyes of the world, and which ought to be as a Comment or glosse upon the Word, to clear up the truth and reality of it to others; that this should so disagree from the Text, as to make the glad some tydings spoken of in it, more disputed and question'd in the thoughts of the unbelieving world than before. It is an error I confesse, and that a grosse one which the *Papist* teach; that we cannot know the Scriptures to be the Word of God, but by the testimony of the Church, yet it is none to say, that a practical testimony from the Saints lives, hath great authority over the consciences of men, to convince them of the truth of the Gospel. Now they'l believe 'tis good news indeed the Gospel brings, when they can read it in your chearful lives; But when they observe Christians sad with this cup of salvation in their hands, truly they suspect the wine in it is not so good as the preachers commend it to them for; should men see all that trade to the *Indies*, come home poorer than they went, it would be hard to perswade others to venture thither, for all the golden mountains said to be there. O Christians, let the world see you are not losers in your joy, since you have been acquainted with the Gospel; give not them cause to think by your uncomfortable walking, that when they turn Christians, they must bid all joy farewell, and resolve to spend their days in a house of mourning.

Secondly, is the Gospel a message of glad tydings? do not then for shame, Christian, runne on the worlds score by taking up any of its carnal joy; Thou need'st not go out of Gods house to be merry, Here's joy enough in the glad tydings of the Gospel, more than thou canst spend, though thou shouldst live at an higher rate than thou doest or canst here on earth. *Abraham* would not take so much as a thread, or shoe-latchet from the King of *Sodom*, *Gen. 14.* lest he should say, that he made *Abraham* rich; A Christian should deny himself of the worlds joy and delights, lest they say, these Christians draw their joy out of our cistern. The channel is cut out of the Spirit of God, in which he would have his Saints joy running. If any be merry, let him sing *Psalmes*.

James 3: 13.

Let the subject of his mirth be spiritual, as on the other hand, *If he be sick, let him pray*; a spiritual vent is given to both affections of sorrow and joy. *Aliter ludis ganeo, aliter Princeps.* A Princes recreation must not be like Russians, Nor a Christians joy like the carnal mans; if ever there was need to call upon Christians to feed the lamp of their joy with spiritual fuel, holy oyl, that drops from a Gospel pipe, now the time is, wherein professors do symbolize with the world in their outward bravery, junketings, fashions, pastimes, and are so kinde to the flesh in allowing of, yea, pleading so much for a carnal liberty in these things, that shews too plainly the spiritual joy to be drawn out of these wells of salvation, does not satisfie them, or else they would not make up their draught from this puddle water, which was wont to be thirsted after, only by those, that had never drunk of Christs cup. O what is the reason, that those, who would passe for Christians, forsake this pure wine of Gospel joy, for the sophisticated stuffe, which this whore, the world presents in her golden cup to them? Is it because the gladsome message of the Gospel is grown stale, and so its joy (which once sparkled in the preaching of it, as generous wine doth in the cup and cheer'd the hearts of believers with strong consolations) hath now lost its spirits? or can that pure streame of spiritual joy, which hath run so long through the hearts and lives of the Saints in so many generations, without mingling with the brackish water of the worlds sensual pleasures, at last fall in with them, & be content to lose its own divine nature and sweetnesse in such a sink? O no! The Gospel is the same it was; the joy it brings as sweet, and brisk, as spiritual and pure as ever it was, and will be as long, as God & Christ continue to be the same, out of whose bosom of love it first flowed, and is still fed. But the professors of this Gospel now are not the same with those holy men and women of primitive times. The world grows old, and mens affections with it chill and cold; we have not our taste so lively, nor our spirits so chaste and pure, to relish the heavenly viands dished forth in the Gospel. The chear is as good as ever, but the guests are worse, we are grown debauched in our judgements, and corrupt in our principles; no wonder then if carnal in our joyes. Errour is a whore, it takes away the heart from Christ & his spiritual joys. The head once dis-tempered, soon affects the heart, and by dropping the malignity of

of its principles upon it, poisons it with carnal affections, and carnal affections cannot fire with any other, than grosse and carnal joyes. Here, here is the root of the misery of our times. * Hith not think you) the Devil plaid his game cunningly among us? who by his instruments (transforming themselves into the likeness of Angels of light.) First, could raise so many credulous souls into a fond expectation of higher attainments in grace and comfort from their new pretended light, than ever yet the Saints were acquainted with, and at last to make them fall so low, be so reasonable, (or rather unreasonable) as to accept such sensuall pleasures and joys as this world can afford, in full payment for all the glorious things he promised them? Well Sirs, this I hope will make some love the Gospel the more, and stick closer to it as long as they live. O Christians blesse God for the glad-tydings of the Gospel, and never lend an ear to him, that would be-telling you other news, except you meane to part with truth to purchase a lie; yea, let it make you careful to draw all your comfort and joy from the Gospels breast, when a carnal heart would be merry, he doth not take the Bible down to read in that; he doth not go into the company of the promises, and walk in the meditation of them; it brings no joy to him, to think of Christ or heaven; no, he takes down a play-book maybe, seeks some jovial company, goes to the Exchange or Market, to hear what news he can meet with. Every one, as his haunt lies: but still 'tis from the world he expects his joy. And now where lies thy road Christian? whether doth thy soul lead thee for thy joy? doest not thou go to the Word, and read there, whil Christ has done for thee on earth, and is doing for thee in heaven? is not the throne of grace the Exchange, to which thou resortest for good news from that far country, heaven, where all thy estate lies, and thy best friends live? art not thou listening, what promise hee'll speak peace from to thy soul? if so, thou hast not thy name for naught: thou art a Christian indeed. *Quis litteris addicti sumus, (saith Erasmus) animi lassitudinem a studiis gravioribus contraham, ab iisdem studiis, sed amantioribus recreamus.* True students, that love their book indeed, when they have weary'd their spirits with study, can recreate them again with study, by making a diversion from that which is severe and knotty, to some more facile and pleasant subject. Thus the true Christian, when his
spirits;

spirits are worn and wasted in the severer exercises of Christianity; such as are fasting and prayer, wherein he afflicts both body and soul for his sinnes, then can he recover them at the feast of Gods love in Christ, where he sees his water turn'd into wine, and the tears that even now his sinnes covered his face withall, washt off with the blood of Christ; when his soul is struck into a feare and trembling with the consideration of the justice of God, and the terrour of his threatnings and judgements for sinne, then the meditation of the sweet promises of the Gospel recreate and revive him; so that in the same word, where he meets with his wound, he findes his healing; where he hath his sorrow, there also he receives his joy.



CHAP. III.

A fourfold peace attributed to the Gospel, and in particular, peace of reconciliation, where it is proved there is a quarrel betwixt God and man, as also that the Gospel can only take it up, and why God thus laid the method of mans recovery so.

THe second enquiry follows, What peace is here meant, that is attributed to the Gospel? Peace is a comprehensive word. *We looked for peace (saith the Prophet) but no good came,* Jer. 8. 15. Peace brings, and carries away again with it all good, as the Sun doth light to and from the world; when Christ would to the utmost expresse how well he wisht his disciples, he wraps up all the happinesse which his large heart could beteme them in this blessing of peace. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you,* John 14. 27. Now take peace in its greatest latitude (if not spurious) and it will be found to grow upon this Gospel-root. So
that

that we shall say the conclusion in general terms.

Doff. True peace is the blessing of the Gospel, and only of the Gospel. This will appear in the several kinds of peace. Which may be sorted into these four.

Doff.

First, peace with God, which we may call peace of reconciliation.

Secondly, peace with our selves, or peace of conscience.

Thirdly, peace with one another, or peace of love and unity.

Fourthly, peace with the other creatures, even the most hurtful, which may be call'd a peace of indemnity, and service.

To begin where all other begin with peace of reconciliation with God. For when man fell out with God, he fell out with himself, and all the world besides; and he can never come to be at peace with these, till his peace be made with God. *Tranquillus Deus, tranquillat omnia.* The point then is,

Doff. 1. That peace of reconciliation with God is the blessing of the Gospel. Three things are here to be done in prosecution of the point. First, I shall shew you that there is a quarrel between God and man. Secondly, that the Gospel, and only the Gospel takes this up, and makes peace betwixt God and man. Thirdly, why God conveys this peace of reconciliation into the world in this way, and by this method.

Doff. 1.

First, there is a quarrel depending betwixt God and the sons of men; open acts of hostility done by one Nation against another; proclaime there is a war commenced. Now, such acts of hostility passe betwixt God and man: Bullets flie thick, to and fro on either hand. Man he lets flie against God (though against his will he shoots short) whose volleys of sinnes and impieties. The best of Saints acknowledge thus much of themselves, before converting grace took them off, *Titus 3. 3. We our selves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures.* Mark the last words, *serving lusts and pleasures.* They were in pay to sin, willing to fight against God, and

II.

whole

side.

side with this his *only enemy*. Not a faculty of his soul or member of his body, which is not in armes against him. *The carnal mind* (saith the Apostle) *is enmity against God*, Rom. 8. 7. And if there be war in the mind, to be sure there can be no peace in the members (inferiour faculties I mean of the soul) which are commanded all by it. Indeed we are by nature worst in our best part, the enmity against God is chiefly seated in the superiour faculties of the soul. As in Armies, the common souldiery is wholly taken up with the booty and spoile they get by the war, without much minding one side or other; but the more principal officers, especially the Prince or General, these go into the field full of enmity against them that oppose them: so the inferiour faculties, seek only satisfaction to their sensual appetite in the booty that sin affords, but the superiour faculties of the minde, this comes forth more directly against God, and opposeth his sovereignty; yea, if it could lay a plot effectual to take away the life of God himself, there is enmity enough in the carnal minde to put it in execution. And as man is in arms against God, so is He against man. *He is angry with the wicked every day, he hath bent his bow, and made it ready, he hath also prepared for him the instruments of death*, Psal. 7. 11. God hath set up his royal standard in defiance of all the sonnes and daughters of apostate Adam, who from his own mouth are proclaimed rebels and traitours to his Crown and dignity; and as against such, he hath taken the field, as with tre and sword to be avenged on them. Yea, he gives the world sufficient testimony of his incensed wrath, by that of it which is revealed from heaven daily in the judgments executed upon sinners, and those many but of a span-long, before they can shew what nature they have by actual sinne, yet crusht to death by Gods righteous foot, only for the viporous kind of which they come. At every door where sinne sets its foot, there the wrath of God meets us. Every faculty of soul, and member of body, are used as a weapon of unrighteousnesse against God; so every one hath its portion of wrath, even to the tip of the tongue. As man is sinful all over, so is he cursed all over. Inside and outside, soul and body, write all with woes and curses so close and full, that there is not room for another to interline, or adde to what God hath written.

In a word, so fiery is the Lords wrath against sinful man, that all the creatures share with him in it. Though God takes his aim at man, and levels his arrows primarily at his very heart; yet as they go, they slent upon the creature; Gods curse blaits the whole Creation for mans sake; and so he payes him some of his misery from the hand of those creatures which were primitively ordain'd to minister to him in his happy state, yea, contribute some drops to the filling of his Cup. As an enraged Army makes spoil and havock of all in their enemies land, destroyes their provision, stops or poysons their waters, burns up their houses, and lets out his fury on all his hand comes at. Truly thus, God plagues man in every creature, not one escapes his hand. The very bread we eat, water we drink, and aire we breath in, are poysoned with the curse of God; of which they who live longest, dye at last. And all these are no more to Hell, than the few files of men in a forlorn to the whole body of an Army; God doth but skirmish with sinners here by some small parties of his judgments sent out, to let them know they have an enemy alive, that observes their motions, takes the alarm their sins give him, and can be too hard for them when he please; but 'tis in Hell where he falls on with his whole power. There sinners shall be *punisht with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,* 2. Thes. 1. 9. And so much for the first, that there is a quarrel between God and man. The second follows.

Secondly, The Gospel takes this quarrel up, and only the Gospel; therefore called *the Gospel of Peace*. This will appear in two particulars. First, the Gospel presents us with the Articles of peace, which God offers graciously to treat upon with the Children of men, and this none but the Gospel doth. Secondly, the Gospel preacht and publisht, is the great instrument of God to effect this peace thus offer'd. First, of the first.

1. The Gospel presents us with the articles of peace, which God graciously offers to treat and conclude an inviolable peace upon with rebellious man. In it we have the whole method, which God laid in his own thoughts from eternity of reconciling poor sinners to himself. The Gospel, what is it, but Gods heart in print? The precious promises of the Gospel, what are they, but Heavens Court rolls, translated into the creatures language? in which are exposed to the view of our faith, all the counsels and purposes of

Gal. 3. 23.

love and mercy, which were concluded on by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the recovery of lost man by Jesus Christ, who was sent as Heavens Plenipotentiary to earth, fully empowered and enabled, not only by preaching to treat of a peace as desired on Gods part, to be concluded between God and man, but, by the purchase of his death to procure a peace, and by his Spirit to seal and ratifie the same to all those, who (believing the credencial letters which God sent with him in the miracles wrought by him, and especially the testimony which the Scripture gives of him) do by a faith unfeigned receive him into their souls, as their only Lord and Saviour. This is such a notion as is not to be learnt elsewhere. A deep silence we find concerning this in *Aristotle* and *Tully*. They cannot tell us how a poor sinner may be at peace with God; nothing of this to be spell'd from the Covenant God made with *Adam*. That shuts the sinner up in a dark Dungeon of despair; bids him look for nothing, but what the wrath of a just God can measure out to him. Thus the guilty creature is surrounded on every side, as with a deluge of wrath; no hope nor help to be heard of, till the Gospel like the Dove, brings the Olive-branch of peace, and tells him the tyde is turned, and that flood of wrath which was poured on man for his sin, is now fallen into another channel, even upon Christ, who was made a curse for us, and hath not only drunk of the brook that lay in the way, and hindred our passage to God, but hath drunk it off, so that where a Sea was, now appears dry Land, a safe and fair Cause, called *Hebr. 10. 20.* a *living way*, by which every truly repenting and believing sinner may pass without any danger, from the justice of God now appeased, into the love and favour of God. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; Rom. 5. 1.* We are entirely beholden to the Gospel for the discovery of this secret, which the *Apostle* solemnly acknowledgeth, *2 Tim. 1. 10.* where Christ is said to *bring life and immortality to light by the Gospel*. It lay hid in the womb of Gods purpose, till the Gospel arose, and let us into the knowledge of it, as the light of the Sun reveals to the eye what was before; but what could not be seen without its light; and therefore, 'tis not only called a living way, but a *new and living way which he hath consecrated for us*, in the place forementioned; so new, that the heart of man never was acquainted with one thought of it, till the

the Gospel opens it, according to that of *Isa. 42. 16, I will bring the blind by a way he knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known.*

Secondly, The Gospel publisheth and preacheth, is the great instrument of God to effect this peace. Before peace be concluded betwixt God and the creature, both must be agreed; as God to pardon, so the sinner to accept and embrace peace upon Gods own terms; But how shall this be done? The heart of man is so deeply rooted in its enmity against God, that it requires a strength to pluck up this, equal with that which tears up Mountains, and carries Rocks from one place to another. The Gospel preacheth is the instrument which God useth for the effecting of it, *Rom. 3. 16. I am not ashamed* (saith the Apostle there) *of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation.* It is the Chariot wherein the Spirit rides victoriously, when he makes his entrance into the heart of man; called therefore *the Ministration of the Spirit*, *2 Cor. 3. 8.* He fashions anew the heart, as he framed the world at first with a word speaking. This is *the day of Gods power, wherein he makes his people willing.* Power indeed to make those that had the seeds of War sown in their very natures against God, willing to be friends with him. Unheard of power, as if the beating of a Drum should carry such a charm along with its sound, to make those on the enemies side upon the hearing of it, to throw down their Arms, and seek peace at his hand, against whom they even now took the field with great rage and fury; Such a secret power accompanies the Gospel. It strikes many times not only the sinners Sword out of his hand, while it is stretched out against God; but the enmity out of his heart, and brings the stoutest Rebel upon his knee, humbly to crave the benefit of the articles of peace publisheth in the Gospel. It makes sinners so pliant and tractable to the call of God in the Gospel, that they on a sudden, (upon the hearing of a Gospel-Sermon) forget their old natural affections, which they have had to their beloved lusts, and leap out of their embraces with indignation, lest they should keep God and them at odds one moment longer. Now follows the third.

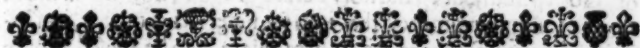
Quest. 3. Why doth God convey his peace of reconciliation by this Channel unto the sons of men? Or in plainer terms, Why doth God choose to reconcile poor sinners to himself by

Christ? For this is the peace which the Gospel proclaims, *Colos. 1. 20. And having made peace through the blood of his Cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; And ver. 21, 22. And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works; yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight.*

Ans.

Ans. They are too bold with God, who say, That he could not find out another way; who can tell that, except God himself had told him so? Alas, how unmeet is the short line of our created understanding for such a daring attempt, as to fathom the unsearchableness of Gods omnipotent Wisdom? To determine what God can, and what he cannot do? But we may say (and not forget to revere the Majesty of Heaven) That the wisdom of God could not have laid the method of salvation more advantageous to the exalting of his own glorious Name, and his poor creatures happiness, than in this expedient of reconciling them to himself by Christ our great Peace-maker. This transaction hath in it a happy temperance, to solve all the difficulties on either hand; and for its mysterious contrivance, exceeds the workmanship which God put forth in making this exterior World (though, that in its kind perfect, and so glorious, that the least creature tells its Maker to be a Deity, and puts the Atheist to shame in his own Conscience that will not believe so) yet I say, it exceeds this goodly frame of Heaven and Earth, as far as the Watch it self, doth the Case which covers it. Indeed, God intended by this way of reconciling poor sinners to himself; to make work for Angels and Saints to admire the mystery of his Wisdom, power and love therein to everlasting. O when they shall all meet together in Heaven, and there have the whole counsel of God unfolded to them; when they shall behold what Seas were dried up, and what Rocks of creature impossibilities digged through by the omnipotent Wisdom and Love of God, before a sinners peace could be obtained, and then behold the work (notwithstanding all this) to be effected and brought to a happy perfection: O how will they be swallowed up in adoring the abyss of his Wisdom, who laid the platform of all this according to the eternal counsel of his own Will; Surely, the Sun doth not so much exceed the strength of our mortal eyes, as the glory of this,

this, will their understandings from ever fully comprehending it. This, this is the piece which God drew on purpose (for its rare workmanship) to beautifie Heaven it self withall; when Christ return'd to Heaven, he carried none of this Worlds rarities with him; not its Silver and Gold; not Crowns and Diadems, which here men venture their lives, yea, part with their souls so prodigally for. Alas, what are these, and the whole pride and gallantry of this World to Heaven? That which it glories most of, suits Heaven no better, than the Beggars dish and scraps do a Princes Table; or the patch't tatter'd Coat of the one, the Wardrobe of the other. No, the Lord Christ came on a higher design than this to earth: The enterprize he undertook to achieve, was to negotiate, yea, effect a peace betwixt God and his Rebel-creature man, that had by his Revolt incur'd his just wrath and vengeance; This was a work that became God himself so well to engage in, that he thought none high and worthy enough to be trusted with the transacting of it beneath his only Son, who staid here but while he had brought his negotiation to a happy period; and then carried the joyful tydings of its being finished back with him to Heaven, which made his return infinitely welcome to his Father, and all the glorious Inhabitants of Heaven his Attendants.



CHAP. IV.

A more particular Account why God reconciled sinners to himself by Christ.

BUT I shall proceed to give some more particular answer to the question propounded.

S E C T.

SECT. I.

I.

First, God layes this method of reconciling sinners to himself by Christ, that he might give the deepest testimony of his perfect hatred to sin in that very act, wherein he expresseth the highest love and mercy to sinners. No act of mercy and love, like that of pardoning sin. To receive a reconciled sinner into Heaven, is not so great an advance, as to take a Rebel into a state of favour and reconciliation. The terms here are infinitely wider; there is reason to expect the one, none to look for the other. It is pure mercy to pardon, but truth being pardoned to save. Well, when God puts forth this very act, he will have the creature see his hatred to sin, writ upon the face of that love he shews to the sinner. And truly this was but needful, if we consider, how hard it is for our corrupt hearts to conceive of Gods mercy without some dishonourable reflection upon his holiness. *I kept silence* (saith God) *Psal. 50.* And what inference doth the wicked draw from thence? *Thou thoughtst I was altogether such a one as thyself*; that is, thou thoughtst I lik'd sin as well as thyself. Now, if so plain and easie a Text as Gods forbearing mercy be wrested; and a false gloss so repugnant, not only to the end of God therein, but to the holy nature of God; how much more subject is forgiving mercy (that is so far superlative to that, and infinitely more luscious to the sinners palate) to be abused? Some men gaze so long on this pleasing Object, that they are not willing to look off, and see any other attribute in God. Now, in this way of reconciling himself to sinners by Christ, he hath given such an Argument to convince sinners, that he is an implacable hater of sin, as hath not its Fellow. 'Tis true, every threat in the Bible tells us, that sin finds no favour in Gods heart; the guilty consciences of men, that hunt them home, and follow them into their own bosoms, continually yelling and crying damnation in their ears; the remarkable judgments, which now and then take hold of sinners in this World, and much more the furnace which is heating for them in another World, shew abundantly, how hot and burning Gods heart within him is in wrath against sin. But when we see him run upon his Son, and lay the

Mic. 7-19; 20.

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envenomed Knife of his wrath to his throat, yea, thrust it into his very heart, and there let it stick for all the supplications and prayers, which in his bitter agonies he offered up to his Father with strong crying and tears, without the least sparing of him, till he had forced his life (in a throng of sad groans and sighs) out of his body, and therewith paid justice the full debt, which he had as mans surety undertook to discharge. This, this (I say) doth give us a greater advantage to conceive of Gods hatred to sin, than if we could stand in a place, to see what entertainment the damned find in Hell, and at once behold all the torments they endure. Alas, their backs are not broad enough to bear the whole weight of Gods wrath at once, it being infinite, and they finite; which if they could, we should not find them lying in that Prison for non-payment. But behold one here, who had the whole curse of sin at once upon his back. Indeed, their sufferings are infinite, *extensive*, because everlasting; but his were infinite, *intensive*; he paid in one sum, what they shall be ever paying, and yet never come to the last farthing. *The chastisement of our peace was upon him, Isay 53. 5. He hath laid on him the iniquity of us all, ver. 6.* Or, he hath made the iniquity of us all to meet in him; the whole curse met in him, as all streams do in the Sea. A virtual collection of all the threatenings denounced against sin, and all laid on him. And now, take but one step more, and consider in how near relation Christ stood in to God, as also the infinite and unspeakable love with which it was filled, and mutually endeared on each hand, and this at the very same time, when he ascended the stage for this bloody tragedy to be acted on him in: And I think that you are at the highest stair the Word of God can lead you, to ascend by into the meditation of this Subject. Should you see a father that has but one only son, and can have no more, make him his Mictimus to Prison, come into Court himself, and sit Judge upon his life, with his own lips pass sentence of death upon him, and order that it be executed with the most exquisite torments that may be; yea, go to the place himself, and with his own eyes, and those not full of water, as mourning for his death, but full of fire and fury; yea, a countenance every way so set, as might tell all that see it, the man took pleasure in his child's death; You would say, Surely he bitterly hates his son, or the sin his son hath committed.

This;

This you see in God the Father towards his Son ; It was he more than men or Devils, that procured his death. Christ took notice of this, that the Warrant for his death, had his Fathers hand and seal to it; *Shall I not drink of the Cup my Father gives me?* Yea, he stands by and rejoiceth in it; his blood was the wine that made glad the heart of God; it pleased the Lord to bruise him, Isa. 53. 10.

When God corrects a Saint, he doth it in a manner unwillingly; but when Christ suffers, it pleaseth him; and not this from want of love in his heart to Christ, nor that any disobedience in Christ had hardned his Fathers heart against him, for he never displeased him; but from the hatred he had to sin, and zeal to exalt his mercy towards sinners, by satisfying his justice on his Son.

SECT. II.

2. Secondly, He effected our peace by Christ, that he might forever hide pride from his Saints eyes. Pride was the stone on which both Angels and man stumbled and fell. In mans recovery, therefore he'll roll that stone as far as may be out of the way; he'll lay that knife aside with which man did himself the mischief. And that he may do this, he transacts the whole business by Christ for them. Mans project, was to cut off the entail of his obedience to God, and set up for himself, as a free and absolute Prince, without holding upon his Maker; a strange plot! for to effect this, he must first have thrown away that being which God gave him, and by a self-creation (if such a thing had been possible) have bestowed a new one upon himself; then indeed, and not till then, he might have had his will. But alas his pride to be what he could nor, lost him what he had, and still might have enjoyed; yet how foolish soever it now appears, and infeasable, that was the plot pride had sprung in mans heart. Now God to preserve his children from all future assaults and batteries of Hell at this door, chose such a way of reconciling and saving them; that when the Prince of the World comes to tempt them to pride, he should find nothing in them to give the least coun-

countenance or colour to such a motion; so that of all finnes, pride is such a one, as we may wonder how it should grow; for it hath no other root to bear it up, but what is found in mans dreaming fancy and imagination. It growes, as sometimes we shall see a Mushroome, or Mosse among stones, where little or no soil is for its root to take hold of. God in this Gospel-way of reconciling sinners by Christ, makes him fetch all from without doors. Wilt thou poor soul have peace with God? thou must not have it from thine own pennance for thy finnes. *The chastisement of our peace was upon him, Isa. 53. 5.* O know thou art not thy own peace-maker. That's Christs name, who did that work, *Eph. 2. 14. for he is our peace, who hath made both one, Jew and Gentile one with God, and one with one another.* Would'st thou be righteous? then thou must not appear before God in thy own cloaths; 'tis anothers righteousness, not thy own, that is provided for thee; *Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness, Isa. 45. 24.* In a word, would'st thou ever have a sight in heavens glory? thy penny is not good silver to purchase it with; the price must not come out of thy purse, but Christs heart; and therefore as it is called the *purchased possession*, in regard of Christ; because he obtained it for us with a great sum, not silver and gold, but his precious blood; so an *inheritance*, in regard of us, because it descends upon us as freely as the fathers estate on his child, *Eph. 1. 14.* And why all this? but that the lofty looks of man may be humbled, and the haughtiness of man should be bowed down, and the Lord alone exalted in the day of our salvation. The *Manna* is expounded by Christ himself to be a type of him, *John 6. 32. The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world.* Now observe, wherefore God chose that way of feeding them in the wilderness. *Dent. 8. 16. Who fed thee in the wilderness with Manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee.* But wherein lay this great humbling of them? were they not shrewdly humbled think you, to be fed with such a dainty dish, which had God for its Cook, and is called *Angels food* for its delicacy? *Psal. 78. 25.* Such, that if they needed any repast, might well suit their table? I answer, it was not the meanness of the fare, but the manner of having it, which God intended

(Yy) should

should humble them. Man is proud, and loves to be his own provider, and not stand to anothers allowance; the same feast sent in by the charity and bounty of another, will not go down so well with his high stomach, as when 'tis provided at his own cost and charges: he had rather have the honour of keeping his own house, though mean, than to live higher upon the alms and allowance of anothers charity: this made them with themselves at their Onyons in their own Gardens in Egypt, and Flesh-pots there; which (though they were grosser diet) liked them better, because bought with their own penny.

SECT. III.

3.

Thirdly, that it might be a peace with the greatest advantage possible; that God and man might meet again on better terms by this pacification, than when *Adam* stood in all his primitive glory. God no doubt, would not have set the beauty of his first workmanship to be so defaced by sin, had he not meant to have rear'd a more magnificent structure out of its ruins. Now God intending to print mans happinesse in the second edition with a fairer character than at the first, he employs Christ in the work, as the only fit instrument to accomplish so great a design; Christ himself tells us as much, *John 10. 10. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*: His coming was not to give those who were dead and damned, bare peace, naked life, but *more abundantly*, than ever man had them before the breach. It was Christ in the second Temple, who fill'd it with a glory superlative to the first: Christ in the second creation of man, that lifts his head above his first state in happinesse. As *Adam* was a pattern to all his seed, what he was in his innocent state, that should they all have been (if sin had not altered the scene, and turned the Tables;) so Christ is a patten to all his seed of that glory which they shall be clothed with; *1 John 3. 2. We are now the sonnes of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, when he appears, we shall be like him*, that is, our vile bodies like his glorious body,

as the *Apostle* hath it, *phil. 3.* and our souls also like his glorious soul. Now by how much our nature in *Christ* is more glorious than it was in *Adam*, by so much the state of a reconciled sinner surpasseth *Adams* first condition. Some little discovery whereof, take in two particulars. *First*, the reconciled sinner hath the advantage of *Adam* in his union to God. *Secondly*, in his communion with God.

First, in his union to God. And that,

First, as it is nearer. *Secondly*, as it is stronger. *First*, it is nearer; because God and man make one person in *Christ*; this is such a mystery, as was not heard of by *Adam* in all his glory, he indeed was in league of love and friendship with God, and that was the best flower in his Crown; but he could lay no claim to such kindred and consanguinity, as now (with reverence be it spoken) the reconciled soul can with God; this comes in by the marriage of the divine nature with the humane, in the person of *Christ*, which personal union, is the foundation of another, a mystical union betwixt *Christ* and the person of every believer, and this is so near an union, that as by the union of the divine nature and humane, there is one person; so also by this mystical union, the Saints and their head make one *Christ*, for as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being members, are one body; so also is *Christ*, *1 Cor. 12. 12. Ecclesia est Christus explicatur.* The Church is nothing but *Christ* displayed; who can speak what an advance this is to the humane nature in general, and to the persons of believers in especial? such a one, as it leaves not only *Adam*, but *Angels* beneath a reconciled sinner in this respect. *Adam* at first was made but little lower than the *Angels*, but by this pair of unions, God hath set the reconciled soul more than a little above them both; for *Christ* by taking on him not the nature of *Angels*, (though the more ancient and noble house) but the seed of *Abraham*, made the elder serve the younger, even *Angels* themselves minister to the meanest Saint, as unto their Masters heir, *Heb. 1. 14.*

Secondly, as the union is nearer, so is it stronger; therefore stronger, because nearer; the closer stones stand together, the stronger the building. The union betwixt God and *Adam* in the first Covenant was not so near, but *Adam* might fall, and yet

Gods glory stands entire and unshaken ; but the union now is so close and strong betwixt Christ and his Saints, that Christ cannot be Christ without his members ; *Because I live* (saith Christ) *ye shall live also*, Joh. 14. 19. implying that their life was bound up in his, and it was as easie for him to be turned out of heaven, as for them to be kept out, Eph. 1. 23. The Church is called *there Christs body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all*. A body is not full, if it hath not every member and joyne, though never so little, and them in their fulnesse too. The Saints grace is Christs glory, 2 Cor. 8. 23. and though his essential glory as God, receives no filling from his Saints or their graces, yet consider him in his Mediatorship, as head of his Church ; so Christs glory is daily filling, as the Elect are called in daily, and as those that are called in, grow up to their appointed stature. Christ hath not his fulnesse, till the Saints have their perfection and complement of grace in heavens glory.

2.

Secondly, in his communion with God ; the nearer (we use to say) the dearer ; communion results from union ; if the union be nearer and stronger between a reconciled soul and God, than *Adams* was, his communion must needs be sweeter and fuller. Why else is the communion of husband and wife fuller, than of friend and friend ? but because the union is closer. God converseth with *Adam*, as a friend with his friend, and ally ; but with the reconciled soul, as a husband with his wife. *Thy Maker is thy husband*, Isa. 44. 5.

There is a double sweetnesse peculiar to the reconciled sinners communion with God.

1.

First, there is in Christ a foundation laid for greater familiarity with God, than *Adam* was at first capable of. He indeed was the *Son of God*, yet he was kept at a further distance, and treated with more state and Majesty from God, than now the reconciled soul is ; for though he was the Son of God by *Creation*, yet the Son of God was not then the Son of man by *Incarnation* ; and at this door comes in the believers sweetest familiarity with God : the Christian cannot lift up now an eye of faith to God, but he sees his own nature standing upon the Throne by him in the person of Christ. And if the sight of *Joseph* at *Pharaohs* right hand, in Court-favour and honour, sent the *Patriarchs* home with such joyful news to their aged Father ; what a ravishing message of joy must

must faith carry then to the soul of a reconciled sinner, when it comes in (after some vision of love in an Ordinance) and saith; Cheer up (O my soul) I see Jesus Christ thy near kinsman, at Gods right hand in glory, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth; fear not, he is so nigh in blood to thee, that he cannot be unmindful of thee, except he should do what were unnatural in it self, that is, *hide himself from his own flesh*. The lower a Prince stoops to the meanest of his subjects, the more familiar he makes himself to his subjects. It was a wonderful condescendence in the great God, (who can have no compeer) first to make man; and then strike so friendly a league and covenant with him. This God doth now with every reconciled soul, and that enrich't with so many astonishing circumstances of condescending grace, as must needs speak the way of the believers access to God more familiar. God doth in this second and new alliance with his poor creature, descend his Throne, exchange his Majestick Robes of glory, for the Rags of mans frail flesh; he leaves his Palace to live for a time in his creatures humble Cottage, and there not only familiarly converses with him, but (which is stranger) ministers to him; yea, which is more than all these, he surrenders himself up to endure all manner of indignities from his sorry creatures hand. And when this his course entertainment is done, back he posts to heaven, not to complain to his Father, how he hath been abused here below, and raise heavens power against those that had so ill entertained him; but to make ready heavens Palace for the reception of those who had thus abused him, and now will but accept of his grace: And lest these, yet left on earth, should fear his re-assumed Royalty and Majesty in heavens glory, would make some alteration with their affairs in his heart; to give them therefore a constant demonstration, that he would be the same in the height of his honour, that he was in the depth of his abasement, He goes back in the same cloaths he had borrowed of their nature, to wear them on the Throne in all his glory (only some Princely coat bestowed, to put them into the fashion of that heavenly Kingdom, and make them suite with his glorified state) giving them a pattern by this, what their own vile bodies (which are now so dishonourable) shall be made another day. Now none of all those circumstances were found in Gods first administration to Adam, and therefore this the more familiar.

Secondly,

Secondly, there is the sweetnesse of pardoning mercy, and the bleeding love of Christ, (who by his death purchased it for him) to be tasted in the reconciled souls communion with God. This lump of sugar Adam had not in his cup. He knew what the love of a giving God meant, but was stranger to the mercy of a forgiving God. The reconciled soul experiments both. The love of a father (more than ordinary kind) is a great comfort to a dutiful child, one that never displeased his father: But it carries no such wonder in it to our thoughts, as the compassion and melting bowels of a father towards a rebellious child doth; and certainly the prodigal child that is received again into his fathers embraces, hath the advantage for loving his father, more than his brother that never came under his fathers displeasure. O this pardoning mercy, and the love of Christ that procured it; they are the most spacious and fruitful heads for a gracious soul to enlarge his sweetest meditations upon here on earth; but who can conceive what ravishing musick glorified Saints will make in running division on this sweet noat? I am sure the song their Harps are tuned unto, is the *song of the Lamb*, Rev. 15. 2, 3. The Saints finished happinesse in heavens glory, is a composition of all the rare ingredients possible, so tempered by the wise hand of God, that as none could well be spared, so not the taste of any one shall be lost in another; but this of pardoning mercy, and the stupendious love and wisdom of God through Christ therein, shall, as I may so say, give a sweet relish to all, and be tasted above all the rest.



CHAP. V.

An Exhortation to embrace this peace of reconciliation, offer'd in the Gospel.

L Et it provoke every one to labour to get an interest in this peace of *Reconciliation* with God, which the Gospel brings. Peace with God? sure 'tis worth the sinners having? Or else the Angels were ill employed, when they welcom'd the tydings thereof into the world at our Saviours birth with such acclamations of joy. *Glorie to God, on earth Peace*, Luk: 2. 14. yea, Christ himself was deceived in his purchase; who if a sinners peace with God be not of high price and value, hath little to shew for the effusion of his heart-blood, which he thought well spent to gain this. But this we cannot believe: And yet to see how freely God offers peace and pardon to the sons of men through Christ, and how coy, yea, sullen and cross'd they are to the motion; one that does not well know them both, (Gods infinite goodnesse, and wretched mans horrible basenesse) might be ready to think it some low priz'd ware which lay upon Gods hands; and this to be the cause why God is so earnest to put it off, and man so loth to take it off his hands. Ah poor deluded wretches! who is the wicked Counsellor that hardens your hearts from embracing your own mercies? None sure but a Devil can hate God and you so much. And he hath sped so well in his own quarrel against God, that he should be hearken'd to by thee poor sinner? Can he give thee armour, that will quench Gods bullets? how then is it that he is so unkind to himself, as to let them lye burning in his own bosome to his unspeakable torment? or will he lend thee any pity, when thou hast by his advice undone thy self? alas! no more:

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more than the cruel wolf doth the silly sheep, when he hath sucked her blood, and torn her in pieces. Think and think again poor sinner, what answer thou meanest to send to heaven, before God calls his Embassadors home, and the treaty break up never to be renewed again. And that thou mayest not want some seasonable matter for thy musing thoughts to enlarge upon on this subject, let me desire thee to treat with thy own heart upon these four heads.

1. First, consider what it is that stands before thee in offer.
2. Secondly, Who it is that offers it.
3. Thirdly, How he offers it,
4. Fourthly, What thou doest when thou refusest it.

SECT. I.

1. First, Consider what it is that is offered thee, *Peace with God.* A thing so indispensable, thou canst not have lesse; and so comprehensive thou need'st have no more than this, and what cometh with it to make thee truly, fully happy; of all the variety of enjoyments with which 'tis possible thy table can be spread, this is a dish can least be spared; take away peace, and that but of an inferiour nature, (outward peace) and the feast is spoiled, though it be on a Princes table. *David's* children had little stomach to their royal dinner, when one of them was slain that sat at the board with them. And what taste can you have in all your Junkets, while God is in array against you, many sinners slain before your eye by Gods judgments, and the same Sword that hath let out their blood, at thy throat while the meat is in thy mouth? Methinks your sweet morsels should stick in your throat, and hardly get down, while you muse on these things. O sinner! is not this as a road swelling at the bottom of thy most sweetly sugar'd cup, that the controversie yet depends betwixt God and thee; thy sins are unpardoned, and thou a dead damned creature, however thou frolicquest it for the present in thy prison? would you not wonder to see a man at his sport, hunting or hawking, and one should tell you this man is to be

be hanged to morrow? Truly God is more merciful to thee than thou canst promise thy self, if he stay the execution till another day. I confesse when I meet a man, whose life proclaims him an unreconciled sinner, and see him spruce up himself in his fine cloaths, entertain himself with the joy of his children, estate, honour, or the like, in this life; it administers matter of admiration to me, what such a one thinks of God or himself. Canst thou think it is long thou shalt sit at this fire of thorns thou hast kindled, and not God for thee? must it needs provoke a creditor to see his debtor live high, and go brave, all at his cost, and all the while never think of getting out of his debt, or make his peace with him? much more doth it God, to see sinners spend upon his bounty, lead joyful jovial lives in the abundance of outward enjoyments he lends them; but take no thought of making peace with him, in whose debt-book they are so deep in arrears. What folly had it been for the *Jews*, when *Ahabshernus* had sealed the warrant for their destruction, to have gone and painted their houses, planted their fields, and let out their hearts in the enjoyment of their estates, without taking care in the first place of getting that bloody decree reversed? a worse sot art thou, that dost all these, while thou carriest the sentence of death from Gods mouth about thee in thy own conscience. Sir *Thomas Moor*, when in the *Tower*, would not so much as trim himself, saying, *There was a controversie betwixt the King and him for his head, and till that was at a happy end, he would be at no cost about it*: Scum but off the froth of his wit, and you may make a solemn use of it. Certainly, all the cost you bestow on your selves, to make your lives pleasurable and joyous to you, is meer folly, till it be decided what will become of the suit betwixt God and you, not for your heads, but souls, yea, soul and body, whether for heaven or hell. O were it not thy wisest course to begin with making thy peace, and then thou mayest soon lead a happy life. We say, *he that gets out of debt, grows rich*. I am sure the reconciled soul cannot be poor. As soon as the peace is concluded a free trade is open'd betwixt God and the soul. If once pardoned, thou mayest then sail to any port that lies in Gods Dominions, and be welcom; all the promises stand open with their rich treasure; take poor soul full lading in of all the precious things they afford, even as much as thy faith can bear, and none shall hinder thee. As a man may

draw the wine of a whole vessel through one tap; so faith may draw the comfort of all the Covenant out of this one promise of reconciliation. If reconciled, then the door is open to let thee into communion with God in all his Ordinances. God and thou being agreed, may now walk together; whereas before thou couldst not look into Gods presence, but his heart rose against thee, as one at the sight of his enemy, ready to draw upon thee with his judgments. *The Smith (we say) and his penny, both are black*; so wert thou with all thy duties and performances, while unreconciled in his eye; but now thy *voice is sweet, and countenance comely*. All the attributes of God (thy ally) are thine; *his horses and chariots shine*, as *Jehoshaphat* told *Ahab*; when every enemy puts thee in fear, you know where to have a friend that will take part with thee; all his providences, though like Bees, they fly some this way, and some that, yea, one contrary to another, as thou thinkest impossible to trace them; yet they are all at work for thee, and thy soul is the hive wherein they will unlade the sweet fruit of all their labour, though possibly it may be night, the evening of thy days before thou findest it. In a word, if reconciled, thou stand'st next to heaven; *Whom he justifies, them he glorifies*, Rom. 8. 30. thou art sure to be there, as soon as death rends the veil of thy flesh, which is all that interposeth between thee and it.

SECT. II.

2

Secondly, consider who it is that offers peace to thee, the great God; and 'tis hard to say which speaks the greatest wonder; for God to offer, or thee to deny what he offers. We marvel not to see the undutiful child on his knee, labouring to soften his fathers heart with his tears, which he hath hardened against him with his rebellions; nor a condemned traitor prostrate at his Princes foot, begging for his life, now forfeited to the justice of the Law: but 'tis something strange, to see the father become suppliant to his child; more for the traitor to open his dungeon door, and find his Prince standing there, and that upon no other errand, than to desire him to accept of a pardon. And yet self-love may be the great motive, for this seeming self-denial. The parent doth but love himself, when he steps below his place to gain his child, that carries so much.

much of its parents life about him. And such necessity of State there is sometimes, that great Princes are forced to stoop to the meanest, yea, worst of their Subjects. A Princes safety may be so intimately concern'd in a traitours life, that he cannot cut off his head, without eminent danger to the Crown that stands upon his own. But none of these streights forced God to take up thoughts of peace to his poor creature; no, they are the birth of free condescending love; and now think again sinner, before the great God hath a denial from thee, if a neighbour, the poorest in the Town, and he one that hath done thee wrong, and not received it from thee, comes to thee; and desires peace, should'st thou reject the motion? would not thy conscience reproach thee to thy dying day? how then wilt thou endure to look God or conscience in the face, if thou refusest peace at a Gods hands? that doth not treat like men, when their Sword is broke, and they cannot fight; but when he hath absolute power over thy life, (which is ever in his hands) yea, a God that hath received the wrong, and never did thee any; yea, should have done thee none, if he had long before this hang'd thee up in chains of darknesse among the damned.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, consider how God offers thee peace.
First, he doth it sincerely, he covers not fraud under a treaty of peace. Among men there hath been horrible juggling in this case. The flag of peace is oft hung out at lip, only to draw them within the reach of their dagger, which is ready to smite them, as Joab did Abner under the fifth rib. In all the Civil wars of France, the poor Protestants found peace more costly to them than war; they beat the Papists in the field, when open enemies, but were betray'd by them in the chamber, when false friends. But for thy comfort know, 'tis a God of truth thou treatest with; never did he shed the blood of war in peace, or give a soul to the sword of his wrath, after quarter taken, and peace given; If we confess, he is just and faithful to forgive; his promises are not yea and nay, like the Devils, who lays them so, that he may have the credit both ways. No, the very heart of God may be seen as thorow a chrystal window in the promise; they are all Yea and Amen in Christ, 2 Cor. 1, 20.

2.

Secondly, he offers peace affectionately, his heart deeply engaged in the tenders of mercy to poor sinners, which will appear.

First, in his contriving a way for reconciling sinners to himself. What men strongly desire, they stretch their wits to the utmost how to accomplish, *The liberal man deviseth liberal things*, Isa. 33. 8. It shews the heart exceeding large in charity, when a man shall sit down, and study how he may find out ways for the exercise of his charity: whereas most men alas bear their brains, how they may save their purses, and scape with giving as little as may be to the poor. O what a rare invention hath God found out for shewing mercy? which hath so many misterious passages in it, that Angels themselves are put hither to School, that by studying this mystery of Gods reconciling sinners to himself by Christ, they might know the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. 3. 10.

Secondly, by the early discovery he made of this to the sons of men. That Prince might well be admired for his merciful heart, (if any History could shew such a one ever to have swayed Scepter in the world, which I think it cannot) who, upon some horrid treason plotted against his Crown and Royal person, and that by one obliged to him with the highest favours possible, could yet not only find in his heart to pardon the Rebel, but also stoop so far, as to be himself the messenger that should carry the news of this his gracious purpose to the traitour in prison, before ever he relented, or had it in his thought to sue for his mercy, and this the same day in which the villanous attempt was made, that the poor wretch might not languish so much as one night under the horror of his despairing thoughts; certainly such a Prince would passe for a none-such in mercy among the sons of men. How then must our thoughts be quite swallowed up into an admiration of this stupendious act of mercy, which the great God expressed to fall'n man, wherein he did all this for his Rebel creature? for no sooner had man broke the peace, and taken up rebellious arms against his Maker, but the Lords heart relented towards him, and could not let the Sun go down in his wrath against him, but must in the very same day that he sinned, let him hear of a Saviour, by preaching peace to him, *in the seed of the woman*, Gen. 2. 15. little did Adam think God had such a message in his mouth for him, when he first heard him coming towards him, and for fear ran his head into a bush, meditating a flight from him, if he had known

whether

whether to have gone. O that *Adam where art thou?* sounded no doubt in his guilty ears, like the voice of an avenging God, calling him a malefactor to execution, but it proved the voice of a gracious God coming, not to meet man in his way returning to him, but to seek him out, who had lost all thoughts of him, that he might give some ease to his own gracious heart, now full of mercy to his poor creature, by disclosing to him the purposes of grace which he had there conceived towards him. Surely his heart was very full, or else this would not have burst out so soon.

Thirdly, the great Ordinance of the Gospel-ministry, which God hath set up in the Church, on purpose to treat with sinners upon a peace, speaks his deep affection to the work. One would have thought it had been enough to print his thoughts and purposes of mercy in the Scripture, though he had done no more. Princes, when they put out a Statute or a Law, expect all their Subjects should enquire after it; and do not send one to every Town, whose office shall be to give notice thereof, and persuade people to submit to it; yet this the great God doth; the Ministers work from one end of the year to the other, what is it but to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God? And in this observe,

First, the persons he sends to preach. Not Angels, foreigners to our nature; who though they wish us well, yet are not so intimately concern'd in mans fall, as to give them the advantage of preaching with those melting bowels, that God would have them filled with, who go on this errand. No, he sends men, with whom he may converse familiarly, creatures of like passions; whose nature puts them under the same depravation, temptation, condemnation, with our selves; who can from the acquaintance they have with their own hearts, tell us the baseness of ours; from the fire of Gods wrath which hath scorcht them for their sins, tell us the desert of ours, and danger we are in by reason of them; as also from the sweet sense that the taste of Gods love in Christ hath left on their souls, can commend the cheer and feast they invite us to upon their own knowledge. Did not God think you desire good speed to his Embassy, when he chose such to carry it?

Secondly, observe the qualifications required in those he employs as Ambassadors to offer peace to sinners, 2 Tim. 2. 24. *The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.* O how careful

ful is God, that nothing should be in the Preacher to prejudice the sinners judgement; or harden his heart against the offer of his grace? if the servant be proud and haſty, how ſhall they know the Maſter is meek and patient? God would have them do nothing to make the breach wider, or hinder a happy cloſe betwixt him and them. Indeed he that will take the bird, muſt not ſcare it. A forward peeviſh meſſenger is no friend to him that ſends him. Sinners are not peſted into Chriſt with ſtones of hard provoking language; but wooed into Chriſt by heart-melting exhortations.

Thirdly, took into the commiſſion God gives his Embaſſadors, and ſtill his heart appears in the buſineſs. Whether you conſider the largeneſſe of it on the one hand, or the ſtriſtneſſe of it on the other. *First*, the largeneſſe of it, *Go and preach* (ſaith Chriſt) *the Gospel to every creature*. Make no difference, rich or poor; great ſinners or little, old ſinners or young; offer peace to all that will but repent and believe, bid as many come as will, here's room for all that come. Again, the ſtriſtneſſe of it on the other hand. O what a ſolemn charge have they of delivering their meſſage fairly? *Paul* trembles at the thoughts of loytering. *Wo unto me if I preach not*. What an argument doth Chriſt uſe (ſeuche from his very heart) to perſwade *Peter* to be careful. *If thou loveſt me, feed my ſheep*. As if he had ſaid, *Peter*, thou now art in tears for thy cowardize in denying me, thou haſt yet one way left, for all that unkindneſſe to demonſtrate thy love to me, and that is by feeding my ſheep: do this, and trouble not thy ſelf for that. Chriſt ſhews more care of his ſheep, than of himſelf.

Fourthly, the joy God expreſſeth when poor ſinners come in to the offer of peace. Joy is the higheſt testimony can be given to our complacency in any thing or perſon; love to joy, is as fuel to the fire; if love lay little fuel of deſires on the heart, then the flame of joy that comes thence, will not be great. Now Gods joy is great, in pardoning poor ſinners that come in; therefore his affection great in the offer thereof. It is made the very motive that prevails with God to pardon ſinners; *Becauſe he delighteth in mercy*, Micah 7. 18. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, for he delighteth in mercy*. God doth all this, *becauſe he delighteth in mercy*. Ask why the Fiſher ſtands all night with his Angle in the River; hee'l

hee I tell you, because he delights in the sport. Well, you now know the reason why God stands so long waiting on sinners, months, years, preaching to them; 'tis that he may be gracious in pardoning them, and in that act delight himself. Princes very often pardon traytors, to please others more than themselves, or else it would never be done; but God doth it chiefly to delight and glad his own merciful heart. Hence, the businessse Christ came about (which was no other but to reconcile sinners to God) 'tis called *the pleasure of the Lord*, Isa. 53. 10. The Lord takes such joy and pleasure in this, that whereas other fathers (whose love to their children sinks infinitely beneath any comparison with the love of God to Christ) mourn at the death of their children, (and most of all when violent and bloody) God he takes content in his Sons death; yea, had the chief hand in procuring of it; and that with infinite complacency; *It pleased the Lord to bruise him*; and what joy could God take in his Sons death, but as it made way for him and his poor creature that were fallen out, and at open war one against another, to fall in again by a happy accord? And now speak O sinner, if God doth not so affectionately desire to be reconciled with thee, doth it not much more behove thee to embrace the peace, than it doth him to offer it?

SECT. IV.

There is but one thing more I would desire thee sinner to consider, and then I leave thee to thy own choice. Consider what thou doest, when thou refusest peace with God. Determinations of war or peace, use to be the result of the most grave counsels and mature deliberation possible. Think and think again, what thou doest, before thou breakest off the treaty of peace, lest thou makest work for repentance, when it will be bootlesse. But lest thou shouldst not be so faithful to God and thy own soul, as to give thy conscience liberty to speak freely in this matter, I shall do it for thee, and tell thee what thou doest when thou rejectest peace. Thou justifyest thy former hostilities against God;

God, and declarest that thou wilt vouch what thou hast done, let God right himself as well as he can. He that refuseth a pardon, either denieth he hath done wrong, or which is worse, stands to defend it; thou hadst as good say, thou desirest not to be friends with God, but hast a mind to perpetuate the feud betwixt God and thee; like *Amilcar*, who was such an enemy to *Rome*, that when he died, he made his son *Hannibal* heir to his hatred against them. It is not enough thou hast fought so many battels on earth against thy Maker, but wilt thou keep the quarrel up in another world also, where there is no more possibility to put an end to it, than to eternity it self? thou throwest the greatest scorn upon God, that 'tis possible for a creature to do; as if Gods love and hatred were such inconsiderable things, that they need not, when cast into the scale of thy thoughts, preponderate thee either way, the one to move thy desire, or the other thy fear. In a word, thou consentest to thy own damnation, and desperately slingest thy self into the mouth of Gods flaming wrath, which gapes in the threatening upon thee. God is under an oath to procure thy destruction, if thou dyest in this mind, which God forbid. Death is the trap-door which will let thee down to hells dungeon, and when once thou art there, thou art where thou wilt have space enough to weep over thy past folly; though here thou hast neither mind nor leisure to make God thy friend. The very thoughts of those offers of peace which once thou hadst, (but no heart to embrace them) will be like so much salt and vinegar, with which thy accusing conscience will be continually basting thee, as thou liest roaring in hell-fire, to make thy torment the more intolerable. I know this language grates in the sinners ears, but not so ill as the gnashing of the sinners own teeth will in hell. I have read of a foolish (I may say cruel) Law among the *Lacedemonians*, that none should tell his neighbour any ill news befallen him; but every one should be left in processe of time to find it out themselves. Many among us I think would be content, if there were such a Law, that might rye up Ministers mouths from scaring them with their sins, and the miseries that attend their unreconciled state: the most are more careful to run from the discourse of their misery, than to get out of the danger of it; are more offended with the talk of hell, than troubled for that sinful state, that shall bring them thither. But
 alas!

alas! when then shall we shew our love to the souls of sinners; if not now? seeing that in hell there remains no more offices of love, to be done for them. Hell is a pest-house, that we may not write so much on the door of it, as, *Lord have mercy on them* that are in it; nay, they who now pray for their salvation, and weep over their condition, must then with Christ vote for their damnation, and rejoyce in it, though they be their own fathers, husbands and wives they see there. O now bethink your selves, before the heart of God and man be hardened against you.

CHAP. VI.

Four Directions by way of Counsel to sinners, yet in an unreconciled state how they may be at peace with God.

Quest. But how may a poore sinner be at peace with God?

Quest.

SECT. I.

First, see and be sensible of the feud and enmity that at present stands betwixt God and thee.

Ans.

First, as to the reality of the thing, that there is indeed a quarrel which God hath against thee, where ever thou goest, an angry God is at thy back, and his wrath like a big bellied cloud, hangs full of curses over thy head ready every moment to empty them upon thy head. There is need of pressing this; for though 'tis ordinary for men to confesse themselves sinners;

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yet

Isa. 36. 11.

yet most are loath to disparage their state so farre, as to rank themselves among the enemies of God; no, they hope God and they are good friends for all this. Like thieves, they will confesse some little matter, but they will have a care of letting fall any thing that may hazard their necks; *sinners* is a favourable word, who lives and sinnes not; that they will grant; but to be in a state of enmity, add under the wrath of God, this scares them too much, and brings them too near the sight of the gallows, the fear of hell, which are due to that state; and therefore when prest thus farre, as the Jews desired *Rabshekah* (when he scar'd them with the dreadful things that would befall them, if they stood out against the King his Master) *that he would not speak in the Jews language in the hearing of the people*, (for fear of frightening them) but in a foreign tongue; So sinners desire those that deal plainly with them, they would not speak so broad in the hearing of their conscience, which they are afraid should know the worst. But if thou lovest thy own soul, make a true representation of thy state to thy self. O what folly is it, for a man to lose his cause by concealing the badness of it?

Secondly, labour to bring thy self under the sense of thy miserable condition as thou art: Hadst thou the Empire of the world, and all Nations creeping to thy foot, as once the beasts did to *Adam*, and a lease as long as *Methusela's* life twice told, to enjoy it in, without the interposition of one cloud all the while, to darken the glory of this thy royalty; yet supposing thee to be one to whom God is an enemy, I would choose to be the worm under thy foot, the toad in the ditch, sooner than thy miserable self in thy palace. One thought of thy approaching death and eternal misery in store for thee, will let out all the joy of thy present happiness. This, this makes the great ones of the world, indeed all unreconciled sinners high and low, to go to their graves, as *Bears* down a hill backwards; alas, if they should but look forward whether they are going, their hearts would soon be at their mouths for want of this breast-plate; a comfortable perswasion of their peace made with God. Go therefore (as a poor malefactor condemned to die would do) shut thy self up from all thy old flattering companions, that would still lullaby thy miserable soul in a senselesse security, (the cradle which the devil rocks' souls in to their utter destruction) none of them come to thee, but send for those that dare

be

beside this to thee, and like *Samuel*, tell thee every word that God saith against thee; and conceal nothing; yea, read thy doom with thy own eyes in the Word; and take thy condemnation from Gods own mouth, and not mans; *There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God*; muse on it, till it cleaves to thy soul, like a drawing plaister to a sore, and brings out the very core of thy pride, and carnal confidence, which hardened thy heart from all sense of thy condition, by which time the anguish of thy own spirit (seeing the streights thou art brought into) will prompt thee to desire peace with God; and this is that which God waits for to heare drop from thee, as much as *Benbadad's* servants, did for a word from *Alabs* mouth.

SECT. 2.

Secondly, look thou propoundest right ends in thy desire of reconciliation with God. Nothing more hateful to God or man than falshood and treachery in treaties of peace; and yet some men can have words as smooth as butter in their mouths, and war is in their hearts at the same time, *Psalme 55. 21.* O take heed of any hollownesse of heart in thy enquiry for peace; when found out (as it must needs be, except Gods eye failes him, which is impossible) it will exceedingly harden the heart of God against thee. God never repented of any he pardoned or took up into the chariot of peace with him; because he was never deceived by any, as men are, who make often peace with those that prove at last false brethren; and give them cause to wish they had never known them. *Joab* kill *Amasa*, but he took no heed to the sword in *Joabs* hand. God looks to the heart, and sees what is in its hand; be sure thou therefore stand clear in thy own thoughts, as to the ends thou aimest at. It is lawful for thee to look to thy own safety; God will give thee leave to look to thy self; this thou mayest, and yet not neglect him: But never was any peace true or sure, where only self-love made it; whether it be with God, or between man and man. Thou seest thou art undone if thou keepest thy old side, and therefore thou seekest peace with God, as the Kings that served *Hadadzer* (when they saw he was smitten before *Israel*), they made peace with *Israel* themselves, 2 *Sam.*

10. 19. well, this may be allowed thee to come over to God, because his is the surer side. Never any made peace with God, but this argument weighed much with them. If *Jacob* could have been safe at home, he had never fled to *Laban*; all are fired out of their holds, before they yield to God. But take heed this be not all thou aimest at, or the chief thou aimest at, this thou mayest do and hate God as much as ever, like those who are said to yield *foignedly* to *David's* victorious armes, because no help for it. A man taken in a storme, may be forced under the penthouse of his greatest enemy for shelter, without any change of his heart, or better thoughts of him, than before he was wont. Two things therefore thou must look to have in thy eye, above thy own self-preservation.

First, the honour of God. Hence oft the Saints prayers are preft with an argument from God, as well as themselves, and their own misery, *Psal. 79. 9. Help us O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy Name, and deliver us, and purge away our sinnes for thy Names sake.* Certainly, if God could not be more glorified in our peace and reconciliation, than in our death and damnation, it were a wicked thing to desire it. But God hath cleared this up to us, that he is no loser by acts of mercy. In this lies the greatest revenue of his Crown, or else he would not love mercy, rather than sacrifice; God is free to choose what suits his own heart best, and most conduceth to the exalting of his great Name, and he delights more in the mercy shewn to one, than in the blood of all the damned that are made a sacrifice to his justice. And indeed he had a higher end in their damnation, than their suffering; and that was the enhancing of the glory of his mercy in his saved ones. This is the beautiful piece God takes delight in, and the other but the shadow to it. Then thou art in a fit disposition to pray for peace, and mayest go with encouragement, when thy heart is deeply affected with the honour that will accrew to God by it. It is an argument God will not deny. *This (said Abigail to David) shall be no grief to thee, nor offence of heart unto my Lord.* 1 Sam. 25. he meant, he should never have cause to repent that he was kept from shedding blood. Thus mayest thou plead with God, and say, O Lord, when I shall with Saints and Angels, be praising thy pardoning grace in heaven, it will not grieve thee, that thy mercy kept thee from shedding my blood, damning my soul in hell. But now 'tis evident, that many who seem to seek peace, and pursue it too very strongly, yet do

not

not take over-much care for Gods honour in the thing. Because they are earnest with God to pardon them in a way that were to him dishonourable, pardoned they would be, though wholly ignorant of God and Christ: they would have God to be at peace with them, while they are enemies to him. Like a thief at the bar, he would have the Judge spare his life right or wrong, legally or illegally, what cares he doth this wretch consider, the honour of the Judge? or that sinner, who so he be saved, cares not how unrighteous God is in the act of mercy? O deceive not your selves poor souls, God will not make war between his own attributes, to make peace with you.

Secondly, you must desire to be reconciled to God, that you may have fellowship with God. Certainly a soul sensible what the losse of communion with God is, counts it hath not all her errand done, when it hath naked peace given it; should God say, Soul I am friends with thee, I have ordered thou shalt never go to hell, here is a discharge under my hand, that thou shalt never be arrested for my debt more; but as for any fellowship with me, or fruition of me, thou canst expect none: I have done with thee, for ever being acquainted more with thee, certainly the soul would take little joy in her peace, were the fire out as to positive torments, yet a hell would be left in the dismal darkness, which the soul would set under for want of Gods presence. *Absalom* knew no middle condition that could please him, betwixt seeing the King his Fathers face, and being killed, 2 Sam. 14. 32. *Let me see the Kings face, and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me.* If I be not worthy to enjoy my fathers love and presence, neither do I desire to live; whereas a naughty heart seeks reconciliation without any longing after fellowship with God; like the traitour, if the King will but pardon and save him from the gallows, he is ready to promise him, never to trouble him at Court, 'tis his own life, not the Kings favour he desires.

S E C T. III.

3. Thirdly, I throw down thy rebellious armes, and humbly submit to his mercie. God will not so much as treat with thee so long as thy sword is in thy hand; Come now, let us reason together saith the Lord, Isa. 45. 18. Mark when the party begins, put away the evil of your doings, ver. 16. Now come and treat with God about a peace.

First, God is a great God, and it doth not become his Sovereignty to treat with his sorry creature on equal terms as a King doth with his fellow Prince, who if he cannot have peace on his own terms, is able probably to revenge himself by force of armes. But as a mighty King with his rebel subject, whom he hath fast bound with chains in prison, and can at pleasure hang up for his treason. The great God will have thee know that. Let those capitulate, who can retire to their strength, and live without peace. But as for the poor sinner, thou dost not, I hope, think thou art in a capacity to meet God in the field, or to thrive by this trade of war against God. No, thy only way is to conquer him upon thy knee, to lay thy neck at his foot, and say, Lord I put my life in thy hands, thy true prisoner I will be, choosing rather to die by the hand of thy justice, than to continue fighting against thy mercie. Now, poor soul, thou art got into the right path that leads to peace. *Humble your selves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up, James 4. 10.* that soul shall not long be out of his armes, that is prostrate at his foot; But though the high and lofty one can stoop to take up a penitent sinner into the arms of his pardoning mercy, yet he will not debase his Sovereignty to treat with a wretch that stands to his armes, and stouts it out with him. There is one red letter in Gods Name, *he will by no means clear the guilty, Exod. 34.*

Secondly, the holy nature of God requires this; sinne is that which made the breach, and caused God to take armes against his creature; how canst thou rationally think to make thy peace with him, and keep this make-bare in thy bosome? God is willing to be reconciled with thee, but wilt thou have him be at peace with thy sinne also? Is it not enough to be justified from thy sinner,

sinne, but wouldst thou have God betray his own honour by justifying thee in thy sinne? Didst thou ever hear a Prince give a Patent to another to cut his own throat? What security canst thou give to God of thy love to himself, thou wilt not renounce that, which is the only thing that seeks his life? *See how God is determined.* As long as the traitor is in favour within, God will not raise his siege, or hear of peace without. They cannot reign together, choose which you will have of them. And be not so farre deluded as to think, for as long as thou art in the way for awhile, as Princes use to do, their favourites in a popular commotion to please the people, and then call for them home, when the habb is over. No, God will not be thus dodged and mocked. See how the promise ruines, and this he will stand too.

Isa. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake the way, and the unrighteous his thoughts, and let him returne unto the Lord, and he will abundantly pardon. See how cautious God is in the terms, no corner left for the least sin to skulk, and save its life in. *He must forsake,* that implies, *he must be driven out, and not have any way to returne.*

First, a deliberate choice in the soul, the heart freely, some men forsake them, the *Devil* is forced out, and is not driven out; occasions to sin cease, or bodily ability to execute the commandment, sin is wanting; here is no forsaking sinne in all this, but to break from it with a holy indignation and resolution when temptations most busie, and strength most active, now *(as David saide)* when his enemy compassed him as Bees, in the Name of the Lord to repel and resist them, this is to forsake. This is the *Exhortation of Moses*, he forsook the Court when he was grown up, not for age as *Baalai*, but when his blood was warm in his veins. A man doth not forsake his wife, when he is detained from her in prison, but when he puts her away, and gives her a bill of divorce. *Isa. 55. 7. Let him returne unto the Lord, and he will abundantly pardon.*

Secondly, to forsake sinne, is to leave it without any thought reserved of returning to it again. Every time a man takes a journey from home about businesse, we do not say he hath forsaken his house, because he meant when he went out to come to it again. No, but when we see a man leave his house, carry all his stuffe away with him, lock up his doors, and take up his abode in another, never to dwell there more, here a man hath indeed forsaken his house. It were strange to find a drunkard so

constant

constant in the exercise of that sin, but sometime you may find him sober, and yet a drunkard he is, as well as if he was then drunk. Every one hath not forsaken his trade, that we see now and then in their holy day suit; then the man forsakes his sinne, when he throws it from him, and bolts the door upon it with a purpose never to open more to it. *Hosea 14. 8. Ephraim shall say, what have I to do any more with Idols?*

Again, observe, before pardon can be sealed, he must forsake not this sin, or that, but the whole law of sin. *Let the wicked forsake his way.* A travelour may step from one path to another, and still go on the same way, leave a dirty, deep, rugged path, for one more smooth and even; so many finding some grosse sins uneasy, and too toilsome to their awakened consciences, step into a more cleanly path of civility; but alas poor creatures, altho they get it to go a little more easily and cleanly to hell, than their heathly neighbours; but he forsakes the way of sinne, that turns out of the whole road; in a word, thou must forsake the blindest path of all in sinnes way, that which lies behind the hedge, as I may so say, in the thoughts of the heart, and the unrighteous his thoughts; or else thou knock'st in vain at Gods door for pardoning mercy, and therefore poor soul, forsake all or none. Save one lust, and you lose on soul; if men mean to go to hell, why are they so mannerly? this halving with sinne is ridiculous. Art thou afraid of this sinne, and not of a lesse, which hinders thy peace, and procures thy damnation as sure, only not with so much distraction to thy drowsie conscience as present? This is as ridiculous, as it was with him, who being to be hanged, desired that he might by no means go through such a street to the gallows, for fear of the plague that was there. What wilt thou get poor sinner, if thou goest to hell, though thou goest thither by thy ignorance, unbelief, spiritual pride, &c. yet led about so, as to escape the plague of open profaneness? O Sirs, consider but the equity, the honourableness of the termes that God offers peace upon; what lust is so sweet or profitable, that is worth burning in hell for? *Darius*, when he fled before *Alexander*, that he might runne the faster out of danger, threw away his *Masse crown* from his head, which bindred him; and is any lust so precious in thy eye, that thou canst not leave it behind thee, rather than fall into the hands of Gods justice? But so fortish is foolish

foolish man, that a wise Heathen could take notice of it; *Esola-
ent patitur, pro quibus pecunia et solvitur; non gratia redimunt;
pro quibus non pro impenduntur; Et l. 1. c. 1. p. 42.* We think we
only buy what we part with money for; and as for those things
we pay our selves, our souls for, these we think we have for no-
thing; as if the man were not more worth than his money.

SECT. IV.

Fourthly, having been faithful to follow the preceding di-
rections, thou now art in a fair way to effect thy much desired
enterprize; hie thee therefore as soon as may be to the throne of
grace, and humbly present thy request to God, that he would
be at peace with thee; yea, carry with thee a faith that thou
shalt find him more ready to embrace the motion, than thou to
make it; only take heed, what thou makest thy plea to move
God, and where thou placest thy confidence; nor in thy repen-
tance or reformation; this were to play the Merchant with God;
know he expects not a chapman to truck with him, but an hum-
ble supplicant to be suitor to him. Nor his absolute mercy (as
ignorant souls do) this is to take hold of the sword by the blade
and not by the hilt; such will find their death and damnation
from that mercy, which they might be saved by, if they did take
hold of it as God offers it them, and that is, through Christ, Isa.
37. 5. *Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with
me; and he shall make peace with me.* And where lies Gods saving
strength, but in Christ? he hath laid strength upon his mighty one,
able to save to the uttermost all that come to God. It is not Gods abso-
lute power or mercy will help thee, but his Covenant, strength &
mercy, as this is in Christ. Take hold of Christ, and thou hast hold
of Gods arm, he cannot strike the soul that holds thereby. Indeed,
Gods essential goodnesse is a powerful argument to perswade the
poor soul to rely upon the promise in Christ for pardon, when
he considers that God who promisseth peace to the believer, is
a God whose very nature is forgiving, and mercy it self; but
had there been no promise to engage this mercy to poor sinners

(Bbb)

through

through Christ; this should have been but cold comfort, to have believed God was good. He could have damned the whole stock of *Mans*, and not sold his essential goodness at the least in question. It is no blot to be almighty in his power, that he doth not *it* *him*. He could make more worlds, (if he was so pleasy) than he hath done; but we have no ground to believe he will, neither is he the lesse Almighty, because he does not; so he could have saved the fallen Angels with the sons of lost man; He is not scantied in mercy for such a design, if he had thought it fit; but having past no promise for such a thing, the essential goodness of God affords the devils but little relief, or hope that he will do it; And yet God continues good. And for ought I can find out of the Word, they among the sons of men, who (either through simple ignorance of the Gospel, or prejudice, which their proud reason hath taken up against the way he takes out for making our peace with God, through Christs satisfaction for us) do neglect Christ, or scornfully reject this his satisfaction, and betake themselves to the absolute goodness and mercy of God; as the pleasure they will make at Christs bar for their pardon and salvation, shall find as little benefit from it, as the devils themselves. Suppose (friends) a Prince should freely make a Law, by which he will govern his people, and takes a solemn oath to keep close to it; could a malefactor, that is condemned by this Law, expect any relief by appealing from the Law to the mercy and goodness of the Princes nature? I confess some have (so) and saved their lives by taking this course. But it hath been because either the Prince was imprudent in making the Law, or unfaithful in keeping his oath: Neither of which can without blasphemy be imputed to God infinitely wise and holy. He hath enacted a Law, called the Law of faith for the saving poor sinners through Christ, and is under an oath to make it good both in the salvation of every one that believe on Christ, and damnation on every one that doth not believe; and to make all this hath given Christ an oath to be faithful in his office, who was trusted as Priest to procure redemption, and shall be Judge to pronounce the sentence (at the great day) of absolute or condemnation. Take heed therefore poor sinner, that thou beest not drawn from placing thy entire confidence on Christ the Son of God, both God and man in one person, who

laid

laid down his life upon agreement with his Father, to make an
 atonement for the sin of the world; and thus offers thee that
 blood (which then he shed) as a price to carry in the hand
 of thy faith to the Father for pardon and peace. Now though
 they should come and call thee from Christ to Christ, from a Christ
 without thee, to a Christ within thee; As the *Isaiah* doeth in
 the *Quint*, into whom he is now got. As the Priests of old
 were wont into their hollow images, that they might deliver
 their lying doctrines out of the mouths of their reputed Saints,
 and thereby cozen the multitude without any suspicion of their
 knavery. But to do the *Isaiah* now, who did deliver his Popish
 stuffe, out of the mouths of the *Quakers*. A design so much
 more dangerous, as far more cunning, than the other;
 There is too much sight and liberty; for they will puppet play to
 take: but though men are so willing to learn, as to a black
 or a stone; yet holinesse in a living Saint commands such reve-
 rence, that the devil hath ever found, and will to the end of the
 world, that he may passe least suspected under this cloak. Well,
 when he comes to call thee from a Christ without thee, to a
 Christ within thee, he will not come out of so pleasing phrase;
 and in plain English, he calls thee from trusting in the righteou-
 nesse of Christ wrought by him for thee, and by faith to be
 made thine for thy justification before God, to an inherent work
 of grace or righteounesse wrought by the Spirit of God in thee
 for thy sanctification and renovation, called sometimes the
inner man, and *new man*. Now, thou hast not made
 a goodly change, if thou hadst let go thy hold on Christ, who is
 thy righteounesse, to relie on a creature, and that a weak one
 too, God knows, full of so many imperfections, that thy con-
 science (except it be judicious, and given over to believe a lie) can
 not but see, that it is a weak and unstable with much more trash
 and dross, which shall never be quite purged off, thou hast got
 into the refining pot of the grave. Look to thy self Christian,
 here is matter of life and death; If the Christ grace within
 thee did melt, thou hast lost in thee, if thou dost not va-
 lue it above all the treasures of the world, which is not
 lost to this Christ, or grace of Christ within thee for life and sal-
 vation; for now thou prizest the creature above God, and settest
 Christ within thee to fight with *Devils* within thee, and the Base

doth well highly to esteem her husbands picture, which he hath given her, especially if very like him, and most of all, if drawn by his own hand: But it were very ridiculous, if she should dote on that so far as to slight her husband, and when she wants money, cloaths, or the like, to go not to her husband, but to the picture he gave her for all. The Saints grace is called, Christ within him, because it is his picture, and makes the Saint so like Christ: This for the resemblance it bears to the holiness of Christ himself, thy husband, who with the finger of his own Spirit, drew it on thy soul, deserves highly to be valued: But what a dotage were it for thee to turn thy back on the Lord Jesus Christ himself, to whom by faith thou art married, and when thou wantest pardon and comfort, wouldst have heaven and happiness, to expect these, not from Christ, but thy grace? O will Christ thank thee for honouring his creature to the dishonour of his person?



CHAP. VII.

An Exhortation to such as are at peace with God, in six particulars.

Use 2.

Secondly, a few words by way of improvement, to you whose peace is concluded with Christ.

I.

First, hast thou peace with God? Look thou makest no peace with sin. This broke thy peace with God; now let thy peace with God; begin a war with that never to have end. Thou canst not sure forget the inestimable wrong and damage thou hast suffered by it; every moments sweet enjoyment of God (whose bosome-love thou hast now happily recovered) will help to keep the fire of wrath and revenge burning in thy heart against that cursed enemy, that both

threw

threw and kept thee so long thence. God hath now won thy heart: (I hope) by his pardoning mercy, dearly to love him for his love to thee. How then canst thou with patience see any lust come braving forth from its trench (thy heart I mean) defying thy God and his grace in thee? *Pan's* spirit was stirred in him at *Athens*, to see God dishonoured by the superstition of others; and is not thine, to see him reproacht by the pride, unbelief, and other, sinnes that do it from under thy own souls roof? Oh Christian, meditate some noble exploit against it; now the more to steel thy heart, and harden it against all relenting towards it; carry the blood and wounds of thy Saviour into the field with thee, in the hand of thy faith; The sight of these will certainly courage thy heart against thy lusts, that stab'd and killed him; more than the bloody garments of *Cesar* (held up by *Anthony*) did the *Roman* Citizens against his murderers. Oh see how cruelly they used the Lord of glory, and where they laid him in an ignominious grave, and that fastened with a seal, stronger than that which man set to it (the curse due to us sinners) never possible to have been broke up by any lesse than his own Almighty arm. And now Christian, shall these murderers, not of man, but of God (for it was the blood of God that was shed) escape that vengeance, which God would have done with thy hand upon them? wherefore else doth he leave thee any life in thy soul; but that thou shouldst have the opportunity of shewing thy love to Christ, by running thy dagger of mortification into their heart? *Alexander* got no more honour by his great victories in the field, than by his piety to his dead father *Philip*: whose bloody death he avenged, as soon as he came into the Throne, slaying the murderers upon his fathers Tomb. O shew thou (Christian) thy piety to thy dear Saviour, by falling upon thy cursed lusts, and that speedily; never rest till thou hast had their blood, that shed his; till thou doest this, thou art consenting to all the cruelty that was executed on him; This, this is the *honour* which all the *Saints* shall have, and therefore the two-edged Sword of the Spirit is put into their hands, that they may execute the vengeance written.

Secondly, Is God reconciled to thee? Be thou willing to be reconciled to any that have wronged thee. Thy God expects it:

at thy hands. Thou hast reason to pardon thy brother for Gods sake, who pardoned thee for his pure mercies sake. Thou in pardoning doest no more than thou owest thy brother; but God pardoned thee when he did owe thee nothing but wrath. Thou need'st not (I hope) think that thou dishonourest thy self in the act, though it be to the vilest beggar in the town, know thou doest it after thy betters. Thy God stooped lower when he reconciled himself to thee, yea, sought it at thy hands; and no dishonour neither to the high and lofty One. Nay, by implacableness and revenge thou debasest thy self the most thou canst likely do; for by these thou stoopest not only beneath thy heaven-born nature, but humane; 'tis the Devil, and none but such as bear his image that are implacable enemies; Hell-fire it is that is unquenchable. *The wisdom from above is easily to be injured!* Thou a Christian, and carry hell-fire about thee? how can it be? when we see a child furious and revengeful, that comes of merciful parents; we like to say, we wonder of whom he got his curish, churlish disposition, his father and mother was not so? who learns thee, O Christian, to be so revengeful and unmerciful? thou hast it not of thy heavenly Father I am sure.

3. Thirdly, Is God at peace with thee? hath he pardoned thy sins? never then distrust his providence for any thing thou wantest; as to this life; two things well weighed, would help thy faith in this particular. First, when he pardoned thy sins, he did more for thee than this comes to, and did he give thee the greater, and will he grudge thee the less? Thou hast Christ in thy pardon bestowed on thee; *How shall he not with him also freely give thee all things?* Rom. 8. 32. When the father gives his child the whole orchard, it were folly to question, whether he gives him this apple or that in it. *All things are yours, and you are Christs;* 1 Cor. 3. 21. The reconciled soul hath a right to all. The whole world is his; but as a father, though he settles a fair estate on his child, yet lets him hold no more in his own hand, than he can well manage; so God gives believers a right to all the comforts of this life, but proportions so much out to them for their actual use, as his infinite wisdom sees meet; so that he that hath less than another in his present possession, ought to impute it not to any want of love or care in God, but to the wisdom both of his love and care, that gives stock as we have grace to work it out; we pour the wine

wine according as the cup is: that which but fills one would half be lost if poured into a lesser. *Secondly*, consider how God gives these temporals to those he denies peace and pardon to. Though within a while they are to be rumbled into hell, yet while on earth his providence reacheth unto them, and doth God feed these *Ravens*, unclean birds? doth he cause his rain to drop fatness on their fields, and will he neglect thee thinkest thou, that art a holier vessel? If the Prince feeds the wayfaring in prison, surely the child in his house shall not starve. In a word (to assure to that, *Luke 12: 28.*) If God in his providence so abounds to the ungodly (as we see he doth) if he cloaths this grass: (for to this the wicked may well be compared) which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into hell's burning oven, *how much more will he cloath you, O ye of little faith?*

4. Art thou at peace with God? O then thou no discontent at any crosse or affliction that God visiteth thee withal. If he hath visited thee first with his mercy, thou hast reason to bid him kindly welcome, when he comes to visit thee with his rod. Thou hast sugar by thee now to sweeten thy bitter cup: when the Prophet *Samuel* came to *Berlebhem*, it is said, *The Elders of the Town trembled at his coming, and said, comest thou peaceably?* and he said *peaceably.* 1 Sam. 16: 4. Thus when God comes with some heavy affliction to us, it may make us tremble till we know what it comes for, whether peaceably or no. Now, if thou beest at peace with God, the fear is over; it cannot but come peaceably: Thou mayest conclude it comes on mercies errand; what condition canst thou (O pardoned soul) be in, that should part thee and the joy of thy peace with God? Is it the wrath of man, thou fearest? possibly thou hast many enemies, and those great ones, and their wrath as great as such can expresse. Let it be so; is God among them or no? Doth God set out their wrath in his wrath against thee? if not, thou exceedingly wrongest God, if overmuch troubled, and thy self also. Thou wrongest God by not sanctifying his name in thy heart, whose mercy (I hope) is able to secure thee from their wrath. *If God be for us, who can be against us?* Rom. 8: 31. Thou need'st not fear them, though an army of them about thee, no more than if they were so many wisps of straw. And thou wrongest thy self also; how indeed can we wrong God and not

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our selves? so long as thou art under the power of such a fear from mans wrath, thou canst never have the taste of Gods love in its true sweetness.

Again, art thou sick, poor, and what not beside? may not God reasonably expect, that reconciling mercy should stop thy mouth from whispering any word of discontent against him, and prevent all envious glances of thy eye at the prosperity of the wicked? Remember man, that thou canst say one great word, which they cannot, in the midst of all their pomp and worldly glory, *Though I lie here poor and sick, yet I am through mercy, at peace with God.* This well thought on, would soon change both your notes. The joy of the prosperous sinner into bitter mourning, and thy sorrow (Christian) into joy. The Lady Elizabeth (afterwards Englands gracious Queen) hearing a simple Milk-maid sing merrily in the field, when she poor Princeesse (being then a sorrowful prisoner) had more mind to sigh than sing (though served at the same time in state as a Princeesse) said, *that poor maid was happier than her self.* And so would the sinner (how great and high soever in the world) think the poorest Christian with his rags and penury, a better man, and happier in his liberty, and peace with God, than himself, in all his grandure and worldly gayeties, did he but consider that in the midst of all these he is a prisoner, not to man, but God, out of whose hands there is no escaping.

5. Fifthly, comfort thy self with this; that thou who art at peace with God now on earth, shalt feast with God ere long in heaven. *Rom. 8. 30. And whom he justified, them also he glorified.* And do not think this news too good or great to be true. Here is a word for it you see. Heavens number of glorified Saints, is made up of justified sinners. Neither more nor less of the one, than of the other. Art thou justified by faith, by which thou hast peace with God? then lose not thy privilege, but rejoyce with thy fellow-Saints, *in the hope of the glory of God.* It is before thee; every day brings thee nearer to it, and nothing can hinder thee of it at last; *not thy sinnes* themselves, and I know thou fearest them most. He that paid thy great score at thy conversion, will find mercy enough in his heart surely, to passe by thy dribbling debts, which thy own infirmity and Satans subtilty have run thee into. Thou wert an enemy, when God thought of doing the first; but

but now thou art a friend, & this will oblige him to do the second, that he may not lose his disbursement in the first: yea, provision is made by God in his method of our salvation for the one, as strongly as for the other. Christ died to make us of enemies to God, friends with him: and he lives now to bring God and us (being thus made friends) to meet in one heaven together. Yea, the Apostle gives the advantage to this of the two for our faith to triumph in. *For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life,* Rom. 5. 10. As if the Apostle had said, Can you believe, that God hath taken you that were bloody enemies into a state of peace and favour with himself? surely, then you must needs find it easier for your faith to argue from reconciliation to salvation, than from hostility & enmity, to pardon & peace; could Christ procure the one by his death, when he was weakest (as I may so say) and at the lowest descent of his humiliation? How much more shall he in the height of his Court-favour in heaven (where he hath all power given him, and in particular the keys of hell and death to open and shut as he pleaseth) be able to save those whom he hath reconciled?

Rev. 1. 18.

Sixthly, art thou at peace with God? knowing the goodness of God to thy self, do thou wooe in some others to embrace the same mercy. The house is not so full, but yet *there is room,* Luke 14. 22. Hast thou none thou lovest so well, as to wish them thy happiness? haply thou hast a carnal husband lying by thy side, children of thy womb or loyns, neighbours in whose company thou art every day almost, and all these in an unreconciled state; who, should they dye as now they live, their precious souls are lost for ever, and yet themselves think no more of this misery coming on them, than the silly sheep doth what the Butcher is doing, when he is whetting his knife to cut her throat. Well, the lesse merciful they are to their own souls, the more need there is thou should'st shew thy compassion towards them. We take most care of those that are least capable of taking care for themselves. If thou hadst a friend sick in thy house, and of such a disease that he could not help himself, should he die rather than thou would'st look after him? if a child condemned to die, though he did himself not mind the getting of a pardon, yet surely thou would'st run and ride to obtain it, rather than see him end his days so shame-

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fully. In a word, dost thou but know that thy next neighbour had an intention to foredo himself, and for that end had lockt himself up in a room; wouldst thou not bestir thee, break up the door, rather than the man should thus miscarry? But alas, where is the holy violence that is used to save poor souls? Parents, husbands, neighbours, they can see their relations going to hell before their eyes; and who saith to them, why do you so? O for the Lords sake, be more merciful to the souls of others. Thou hast found a feast, let not any that are near thee starve for want of knowledge, where it is to be had; go and invite all thou canst see, to Gods house: so did David, Pla. 34. 8. *O taste and see that the Lord is good.* Thou needst not fear a chiding from God, for sending him more guests. He complains he hath no more, *Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life,* Job. 5. 40. He threatens those that keep sinners off from making their peace with him, by flattering them with a false one, called a *strengthening the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life,* Ezek. 13. 22. O how acceptable a work then must it needs be to wooe souls in to Christ? The Merchant is not angry for sending a customer into his Ware-house, that will buy what he hath taken so much cost and travail to get that he may sell; Nor will the Physician blame any for bringing a Patient to him, by whose cure he may let the world know his skill and art. And this is the great design Christ hath long had, and in particular pray'd for, Job. 17. 21. *That the world might believe that he was sent of God;* what aims he at in the gathering in of souls by the grace of the Gospel, but to take out a people (from the heap of sinners) for his name? Act. 15. 14. that is, cull out a number, in shewing mercy to whom he might exalt his own name gloriously.

CHAP. VIII.

That peace of conscience is a blessing to be obtain'd from the Gospel, and only the Gospel, with a double demonstration thereof.

WE come now to the second kind of peace, and that is peace of consolation, or peace of conscience; by the former the poor sinner is reconciled to God; by this, he becomes *anima pacata sibi*. A soul reconciled to it self; since man fell out with God, he could never be truly friends with his own conscience. This second peace is so necessary, that he cannot taste the sweetness of the first, nor indeed of any other mercy without it. This is to the soul what health is to the body; it sugars and sweetens all enjoyments. A suit (though of cloth of gold) sits not eaise on a sick mans back: Nothing joyous to a distressed conscience. Moses brought good news to the distressed Israelites in Egypt, but it is said, *they hearkned not to him for anguish of spirit*, Exod. 6. 9. Hannah, she went up to the festival at Jerusalem with her husband, but 'tis said, *she wept and did not eat*, 1 Sam. 1. 7. Truly thus the wounded soul goes to the Sermon, but doth not eat of the feast before it, hears many precious promises, but her ear is shut up from receiving the good news they bring. Tell one in trouble of conscience, Here's your dear husband; sweet children, will you not rejoyce with them? alas, the throes such a one feels, are so amazing, that he regards these things no more than Phineas's wife in her journey, did the women that joy'd her with the birth of a sonne. Set the Royallest feast before such a soul, that ever was on Princes table, and (poor heart) it had rather go into a corner and weep, than sit and eat of these delicats. *A wounded*

*Spirit who can bear ? yea, who can cure ? some diseases are for their incurableness, called *Indibrium medicorum*, The Physicians shame and reproach. To be sure this spiritual trouble of an accusing conscience puts all the world to shame for their vain attempts. Many have attempted to conjure this evil spirit out of their own bosoms and others ; but have found it at last to leap upon them, and prevail against them, as the evil spirit, Acts 19. 14. did by the Sons of Sceva.*

Now, peace of conscience (I am now to shew) is the blessing of the Gospel, and only of the Gospel : Conscience knows Jesus, and the Gospel of Jesus ; these and none else it will obey. Two particulars consider'd will demonstrate the truth of the point. *First*, if we consider what is the argument that pacifies and satisfies conscience. *Secondly*, what the power and strength that is required to apply this argument so close and home to the conscience as to quiet and fully satisfy it, both these will be found in the Gospel, and only in the Gospel.

SECT. I.

First, let us enquire what is the argument that is able to pacify conscience, when thoroughly awakened. Now to know this, we must enquire, what is the cause of all those convulsions of horror and terror with which the consciences of men are at any time so sadly rent and distorted. Now this is sin ; could this little word (but great plague) be quite blotted out of mens minds and hearts, the storm would be soon hush'd, and the soul become a pacifique sea, quiet and smooth, without the least wave of fear to wrinkle the face thereof. This is the *Jonas*, which raiseth the storm ; The *Achan*, that troubles the soul. Where-ever this comes (as was observed of a great Queen in France) a war is sure to follow ; when Adam sinned, he dissolv'd another manner of jewel than *Cleopatra* did ; he drunk away this sweet peace of conscience in one unhappy draught, which was worth more to him than the world he lived in. No wonder that it rose in his conscience as soon as it was down his throat. *They saw that they were naked.* Their consciences reproach'd them for *curse*d.

curst Apostates. That therefore which brings peace to conscience, must prostrate this *Goliath*, throw this troubler over-board, pluck this arrow out of the soul; or else the war will not end, the storm will not down, the wound will not close and heal, which conscience labours under. Now the invenomed head of sins arrow, that lies burning in conscience, and by its continual boking and throbbing there, keeps the poor sinner out of quiet, yea, sometime in unsupportable torment and horreur, is guilt, whereby the creature is alarm'd up to judgement, and bound over to the punishment due to his sinne; which being no lesse than the infinite wrath of the eternal living God, must needs lay the poor creature into a dismal agony, from the fearful expectation thereof in his accusing conscience: He therefore that would use an argument to pacifie and comfort a distressed conscience, that lies roasting upon these burning coals of Gods wrath, kindled by his guilt, must quench these coals, and bring him the certain news of this joyful message, that his finnes are all pardoned, and God (whose wrath doth so affright him) is undoubtedly, yea, everlastingly reconciled to him. This, and no other argument will stop the mouth of conscience, and bring the creature to true peace with his own thoughts; *San be of good chear* (said Christ to the Pallie-man), *thy sins be forgiven thee*, Matth. 9. 2. *Not be of good chear, thy health is given thee*, (though that he had also) but thy sins are forgiven thee. If a friend should come to a malefactor on his way to the gallows, put a sweet posie into his hands, and bid him be of good chear, smell on that; alas this would bring little joy with it to the poor mans heart, who sees the place of execution before him. But if one comes from the Prince with a pardon, which he puts into his hand, and bids him be of good chear: this, and this only will reach the poor mans heart, and over-run it with a sudden ravishment of joy. Truly any thing short of pardoning mercy, is as inconsiderable to a troubled conscience (towards any relieving or pacifying it) as that posie in a dying prisoners hand would be. Conscience demands as much to satisfie it, as God himself doth to satisfie him for the wrong the creature hath done him. Nothing can take off conscience from accusing, but that which takes off God from threatning. Conscience is Gods Serjeant he employs to arrest the sinner. Now the Serjeant hath no power to release

his prisoner upon any private composition between him and the prisoner; but listens, whether the debt be fully paid, or the creditour fully satisfied; Then, and not till then, he is discharg'd of his prisoner. Well, we have now only one step to go further, and we shall bring this demonstration to a head; from what quarter comes this good news, that God is reconciled to a poor soul; and that his finnes are pardoned? surely from the Gospel of Christ, and no other way besides. Here alone is the Covenant of peace to be read betwixt God and sinners; here the sacrifice by which this pardon is purchased; here the means discovered by which poor sinners may have benefit of this purchase; and therefore here alone can the accusing conscience find peace. Had the stung *Israelites* lookt on any other object, besides the *brazen Serpent*, they had never been healed. Neither will the stung conscience find ease with looking upon any, besides Christ in the Gospel-promise. The *Levite* and the *Priest*, lookt on the wounded man, but would not come near him; there he might have lain and perished in his blood for all them. It was the good *Samaritan* that poured oyl into his wounds. Not the Law, but Christ by his blood, bathes and supples, closeth and cureth the wounded conscience. Not a drop of oyl in all the world to be got, that is worth any thing for this purpose, besides what is provided and laid up in this Gospel-vial. There was abundance of sacrifices offered up in the *Jewish Church*; yet put all the blood of those beasts together, which was poured out from first to last in that dispensation, and they were not able to quiet one conscience, or purge away one sinne. The conscience of sinne, as the *Apostle* phraseth it, *Heb. 10. 2.* that is, guilt in their conscience would still have remained unblotted, notwithstanding all these (if sever'd from what was spiritually signified by them.) And the reason is given, *ver. 4. for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sinnes.* There is no proportion betwixt the blood of beasts though it could swell into a river, a sea, and the demerit of the least sinne. Mans sin deserves mans death, and that eternal both of body and soul in hell. This is the price God hath set upon the head of every sinne. Now the death of beasts being so far beneath this price, which divine justice demands as satisfaction for the wrong sin doth him; it must needs be as far beneath pacifying the sinners conscience; which requires

much to satisfie it, yea the very same, as it doth to satisfie the justice of God himself. But in the Gospel, behold joyful news is brought to the sinners ears of a fountain of blood there opened, which for its preciousnesse is as far above the price that divine justice demands for mans sin, as the blood of bulls and beasts was beneath it; and that is, the blood of *Jesus Christ*, who freely poured it out upon the Crosse, and by it obtain'd eternal redemption for us, Heb. 9. This is the door all true peace and joy comes in to the conscience by; Hence we are directed to bottom our confidence, and draw out comfort here, and no where else, Heb. 10. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*; Mark that, *sprinkled from an evil conscience*: Conscience by office is appointed, to judge of a mans actions and state; whether good or bad, pardoned, or unpardoned; if the state be good, then it is to acquit and comfort; if evil, then to accuse and condemn him; therefore the evil conscience here, is the *accusing conscience*; from this evil conscience, we are said to be sprinkled, that is, freed by the blood of Christ sprinkled on us; 'tis sinne the evil conscience accuseth of, and wrath (the due punishment for that) it condemns the poor creature unto; and to be sprinkled with the blood of Christ, is to have the blood of Christ applied to the heart by the spirit for pardon and reconciliation with God. *Sprinkling in the Law* did denote the cleansing of the person so sprinkled from all legal impurities; yea, the believing soul from all sinful uncleannesse by the blood of Christ, which was signified by the blood of those sacrifices. Therefore David prays, Psalm 51. 7. *Purge me with hyssop, then shall I be clean*, that is, apply the blood of Christ to my troubled conscience (as they with a bunch of hyssop did the blood of the beast into which it was dip't, upon the *Lep*er to cleanse him.) *Then* (saith he) *I shall be clean*; this sin, which now doth affright my conscience, shall be wash'd off, and I at peace, as if I had never sinn'd. To this sprinkling of blood the Holy Ghost alludes, Heb. 12. 24. where we are said in the Gospel administration, *To be come to Jesus the Mediatour of a better Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than the blood of Abel*; that is, better things in the conscience. *Abels* blood sprinkled in the guilt of it upon *Cains* conscience, spake swords and daggers, hell and damnation; but the blood of Christ sprinkled in

in the conscience of a poor trembling sinner, speaks pardon and peace. Hence it is called *the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. 3. 21. An answer supposeth a question; an answer toward God, supposeth a question from God to the creature. Now the Question God here is supposed to propound to the poor creature, may be conceiv'd to be this; What canst thou say (who art a sinner, and stand'st by the curse of my righteous Law doom'd to death and damnation) why thou should'st not die the death pronounced against every sinner?

Now the soul that hath heard of Christ, and hearing of him, hath received him by faith into his heart, is the person, and the only person, that can answer this question, so as to satisfy God or himself. Take the answer, as it is formed and fitted for, yea, put into the mouth of every believer, by the *Apostle Paul*, Rom. 8. 34. *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us*; such an answer this is, that God himself cannot object against it; and therefore St. Paul (representing all believers) triumphs in the invincible strength thereof against all the enemies of our salvation; *who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* ver. 35. and proceeds to challenge in death and devils, with all their attendants, to come and do their worst against believers, who have got this breast-work about them, and at last he displays his victorious colours, and goes out of the field with this holy confidence, that none (be they what they will) shall ever be able to hurt them, verse 38, 39. *I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*; in him he lodgeth his colours, and lays up all his confidence. But I am afraid I have been too long; if I can be said to be too long on this subject, the richest vein in the whole mine of Gospel-treasure.

SECT. II. *How the word of the Gospel may be used to comfort a troubled conscience.*

The second demonstration is taken from the strength and power required to presse this argument home to the conscience, so as to satisfy it, and make it acquiesce therein. Conscience is a lock that goes hard, though the key fit it (I mean the argument used to comfort it be suitable and strong) yet if this key be in a weak hand, that cannot turn it in this lock (as it is when ever a meer creature holds it) conscience will not open; its doubts and fears will not be resolv'd. No, this must be the work of the Spirit, or else it will never be done. Conscience is Gods officer; and though the debt be paid in heaven, yet it will not let the soul go free, till a warrant comes from thence to authorize it. And who can bring this but the Spirit of God? so that, as 'tis not in all their power that are about the poor prisoner to comfort him, till news come from Court, what the Prince means to do with him; so here in this case, *when he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who can behold him?* Job 34. 29. Now two things I shall do for the bringing this demonstration to a head. *First*, shew that the Gospel only presents the Spirit of God to us under the notion of a Comforter. *Secondly*, the admirable fitnessse and sufficiency of the holy Spirit to pacifie and comfort a guilty troubled conscience: the first will evince that peace of conscience is no where else to be found but from the Gospel, the second will shew that it is there abundantly to be found.

First, 'tis the Gospel alone that presents the Spirit of God as a Comforter to poor sinners. Indeed the comforting office of the Spirit is founded on the satisfaction of Jesus Christ. When Christ had shed his blood, and in it laid down upon the naile, the full price of a sinners peace with God; then at his return to heaven he prays his Father to send the Comforter: Neither could Christ desire this request of his Father, nor his Father grant it to him, but upon the account of this his death, which secures the justice of God from receiving any damage by the comfort which the Spirit carries into the believing sinners bosom. Christ tells his disciples thus much, *John 16. 7. If I go not away, the Comforter*

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will

will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you; pray mark, the Spirit as a Comforter, stays till Christ goes to heaven to send him down; and no room for Christ there, till the work was done he came about; and what was that, but by his bloody death to purchase peace with God for poor believing sinners? and now let him come when he will, the Spirit is ready to be sent as a Comforter, as soon as he appears in the heavens with his blood as an Intercessour. But whence then had the Old Testament Saints all their peace and comfort, who liv'd before Christ return'd to heaven; yea, before he took his first journey, from heaven I mean to earth? I answer, upon the same account they had their comfort, that they had their pardon. They were pardoned through the blood of Christ, who was virtually a Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, and they were comforted by the Spirit of Christ, whose comforting office bears the same date with Christs Mediators office. As all their pardons were issued out upon the credit of Christ, who stood engaged in the fulness of time to lay down his life, so all the comforts which the Spirit of Christ issued out into their consciences, was upon the same credit of Christ, who should, as to the fulnesse of time die on earth for sinners, so appear also in the heavens (by vertue of the satisfaction that his death should make) where to intercede with the Father for a Comforter. Thus you see the first thing. The Spirit as a Comforter hath his office from the Gospel-Covenant, and could never have spoke word of comfort, but upon this Gospel account. Hence it is, when the Father sends him as a Comforter, he sends him in Christs Name, who hath made up the breach betwixt him and sinners, John 14. 26. that is, for his sake, and at his entreaty: yea, when the Spirit doth comfort, what is it he saith? the joyful news he brings is Gospel-intelligence, John 16. 13, 14. He shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, he shall speak; the meaning is, when he comes to teach, he shall not bring new light different from what shines in the Gospel, but what truth Christ preacht in the Gospel, that he shall teach when he comforts, the ingredients which his soul-reviving cordials shall be made of, are, what grow in the Gospel-garden, as v. 14. He shall glorifie me, for he shall receive of mine, and shew it to you, that is, my death, my merit, my resurrection, my ascension and intercession, my promises purchased and sealed with my blood; these he shall take and make report of them to you, for your eternal joy and

and comfort; so that, if it had not been for these, the Spirit who is Christ's messenger, would have wanted an errand of this comfortable nature to have brought unto poor sinners: yea, instead of a Comforter, he would have been an accuser and a tormentor; he that now bears witness with our spirits for our reconciliation, adoption and salvation, would have joyn'd in a sad testimony with our guilty consciences against us, for our damnation and destruction.

Secondly, I am to shew the admirable fitnessse of the Spirit for this comforting office which the Gospel reveals him to have, for the pacifying and satisfying the consciences of poor disconsolate sinners; You have heard the Gospel affords an argument sufficient to satisfy the most troubled conscience in the world, to wit, the full satisfaction which Christ by his precious blood hath made to God for sinners. But if poor man had been left to improve this as well as he could for his comfort, he might have lain long enough roaring in the horror of his scorched conscience without ease, for want of one to drop this cooling healing balm into it. But as both the wisdom and love of God appear'd in providing an able Saviour to purchase eternal redemption for us; so also a meet Comforter, as able to apply this purchased redemption to us; his Consolations are called *strong Consolations*. Christ shew'd his strength, when he unhing'd the gates of the grave, and made his way out of that dark prison by his glorious resurrection: by this, he was declared to be the Son of God with power, as the Apostle hath it, *Rom. 1. 4*. And truly it requires no lesse power to break open the dungeon, wherein the guilty conscience lies shut up, as one free among the dead in his own despairing thoughts; for if you observe it well, the same stone and seal are upon the sinners conscience to keep him down from a resurrection to comfort, as was on Christ's grave, to keep him down from a resurrection to life. What was the heaviest stone, the strongest seal upon dead Jesus to keep him from rising? not the stone man rolled upon him; not the seal, the Jews thought to fasten the grave with; but the curse of the Law for sin, which Divine justice rolled upon him; this prest the heaviest upon Christ without all compare; the Angel himself that roll'd away the stone, could not have removed the curse, now look upon the distressed consciences grave, where its own guilt hath laid it, what is that? no other, than the lowest hell in its fears and pre-

sent dismal apprehensions, I am damned, I am for ever an undone creature, is the language such a one rings continually in his own ears, but enquire what is it that keeps him down in this grave; what hinders, but the poor wretch may be help't out of this pit of horrore, and receive some comfort? alas, he will tell you that it is, but in vain to comfort him, this oyndment is all wasted to no purpose, which you poure upon his head. No, he is an undone sinner, the curse of God sticks like a dagger in his heart, the wrath of God lies like a Mountaine of lead on his conscience; except you can put your hand into his bosome, and pluck out the one, or by main force roll off the other, 'tis impossible, that he should be raised to any peace or comfort in his miserable conscience; you see it is the same grave-stone on both. But for thy eternal comfort know (poor heart) that art thus fast laid under the sense of the curse due to thy sins: as the weight is the same, that keeps thee from comfort, which lay on Christ to keep him from life; so the same power and strength is sent to raise thee to comfort: that enabled Christ to rise to life. That Spirit, who kept the Lord Jesus from seeing corruption in the grave, that restrained death, when it had Christ in its very mouth, so as it could no more feed on him, than the Whale could digest *Janas* in her belly; yea, that quickened his dead body, and raised him with honour, not only to life; but immortality also, is he that Christ sends for his messenger, to come and satisfie the trembling consciences of his poor children on earth, concerning his love; yea, his fathers love to them for his sake. This blessed Spirit hath all the properties of a Comforter; *He is so pure and holy, he cannot deceive*; called therefore *the Spirit of truth*, John 14. If he tell thee thy sins are pardoned, thou mayst believe him, he will not flatter; if it were not so, he would have brought another message to thee: for he can chide and reprove as well as comfort, convince of sin as well as of righteousness. He is so wise and omniscient, that he cannot be deceived. Never did the Spirit of God knock at the wrong doors, and deliver his letters into a wrong hand (as a man may do especially where persons are very like.) The Spirit exactly knows the heart of God to the creature, with all his counsels and purposes concerning him, 1 Cor. 2. 11. *The Spirit searcheth all things: the deep things of God.* And what are those deep things of God the Apostle means? but the counsels of love which lie deep in his heart, till the Spirit draws them forth, and acquaints the creature

ture with them, as appears by *ver. 9.* And also he knows the whole frame of mans heart, it were strange, if he that made the cabinet should not know every secret box in it. Some few men have compassed that we call the greater world, but the little world of man (as we call him) never did any creature encircle with his knowledge, no not the Diel himself, who hath made it his work so many thousands of years to make a full discovery of it: But the Spirit of God doth know him, *intus est in cute*, (as we say) thoroughly; and knowing both these, he cannot be deceived.

In a word, *he is so irresistible*, that none can hinder the efficacy of his comforts. The pardon brought by *Nathan* to *David*, did not lie so close, as the holy man desired, and therefore away goes he to beg comfort of the Comforter; *Psal. 51.* where you find him on his knees praying hard to have his lost joy restored, and his trembling heart establish't by the free Spirit of God. Though thou can't baffle man, and through thy own melancholy fancy, and the sophistry of Satan, (who coins distinctions for thee,) evade the arguments that Chistians and Ministers bring for thy comfort; yet when the Spirit comes himself, all disputes end: The Diel cannot chop logick with him; no, then the lying spirit vanisheth, and our own fears too, as the darkness flees before the Sun; so sweetly and powerfully doth the comforting Spirit over-run the heart with a flood of joy that the soul can no more see her sins in the guilt of them, than *Noah* could the mol-hills, when the whole earth was under water.

CHAP.



CHAP. IX.

A reproof to three sorts of persons that offend against this peace which the Gospel brings.

Use. I.

First, is peace of conscience the blessing of the Gospel? this reproves three sorts of persons.

SECT. I.

I.

First, the *Papists*, who interpretatively deny this, in denying that any person can know in this life (unlesse by an extraordinary revelation) that he is a child of God, and one that shall be saved; which if true, would stave all to pieces the vessel in which the Christians joy and inward peace is kept; whence comes the peace we have with our own consciences, but from the knowledge we have of our peace with God? *Rom. 5. 1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, by whom we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand and rejoyce in hope of the glory of God.* If the poor soul be left at uncertainties here, and the Gospel cannot resolve it, what its state is, for hell or heaven, farewell to all inward peace; the poor Christian then may say of himself, with a trembling heart, what Saint *John* saith in another case of him that hateth his brother, *1 John. 2. 11. He walks in darknesse, and knows not whether he goes: truly then it might rather be called the Gospel of fears and doubts, than the Gospel of peace,* But is that the top of the blessing the Gospel brings

brings to Saints, which was almost the bottome of the curse that the Law denounced against sinners? *Deut. 28. 66.* That *their life should hang in doubt before them, and they should fear day and night, and should have no assurance of life.* Bold men, that dare so wretchedly disfigure the sweet face of the Gospel, making Christ in his precious promises, speak as doubtfully to his Saints, as the Devil did in his Oracles to his Devotees. Because their hypocrisie makes them justly question their own salvation, and will not suffer them to apply the comfort of the promises to themselves: must they therefore seal up these wells of salvation from those that are sincere, and then lay the blame on the Gospel, which is due only to their own wickednesse? But there is a mystery of iniquity which hath at last been found to be at the root of this uncomfortable doctrine of theirs. They are a little kin to *Judas*, who was a thief, and carried the bag. These have a bag too, into which they put more gold and silver, that this doctrine brings them in, than ever *Judas* had in his, though the doctrine of Gospel-grace to poor sinners would bring more peace to others consciences, might it be seen in its naked glory among them; yet the superstitious fear which they keep ignorant souls in, brings more money to their purses; and this lies so near the heart of their Religion, that Gospel, Christ, heaven, and all must bowe unto it.

SECT. II.

Secondly, those are to be reprov'd who frame very unlovely images in their own foolish imaginations of the Gospel, as if there was nothing lesse than peace of conscience and inward comfort to be found in it; and all, because they see some that professe it who cannot shew that they have got any more peace and comfort since their acquaintance with the Gospel, than they had before, or than themselves have, who are yet strangers to it; yea, may be, discover more trouble of spirit. Such I would desire to take these following particulars (by way of answer) into their serious consideration.

First, consider all are not true Christians that hang upon the Gospel

Gospel by profession; and no blame can be laid on the Gospel, though it doth not lavish out this treasure to every one that scrapes acquaintance with it. The Spirit of God is too wise and faithful to set his seal to a blank. The Minister indeed offers peace to all that will accept it; but where the peace of the Gospel meets with a false heart, it will not stay there. *Mat.*

10. 13. If the house be not worthy, let your peace return unto you. As the Dove returned to the Ark again, when it found the earth under water; so doth the Spirit of God carry his comfort back with him to heaven from a soul that is yet in the fuds of sin, soaking in his abominations; where can this heavenly Dove find rest for the sole of her foot in such a soul? And will he speak peace to that soul, in which himself can find no rest.

2. Secondly, as for those that are sinners, true-hearted Christians, there are several considerations which will vindicate the Gospel to answer its name, and to be a Gospel of peace and consolation.

1. First, some that are sincere Christians, do not so clearly understand the doctrine of the Gospel as others, and the want of light or joy and comfort in their consciences comes from that want of light in their understandings. The ignorance of the workman doth not disparage the art. *Plus est in arte, quam in artifice.* There is fulness of comfort in the principles of the Gospel, but every Christian hath not attain'd to the riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, which the Apostle directs the Colossians to, as a Sovereign means whereby their hearts might be comforted, Col. 2. 2.

2. Secondly, some that do understand the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ (the only foundation to build and rear up true comfort and peace of conscience on,) yet may by their negligence in their Christian course (not walking carefully by the rule of the Gospel) deprive themselves at present of this sweet peace, which otherwise might flow into their bosomes from the promises of the Gospel. *As many as walk by this rule, peace be unto them,* Gal. 6. 16. And if so, what blame can be laid on the Gospel? Be the pen never so good, and the hand never so skilful, it will not write on wet paper; yet we do not fault the hand or pen,

pen, but paper; if the heart (though of a Saint never so eminent) be under the defilement of a present lust not repented of, no promise will speak peace to him; he is a disorderly walker, and the Spirit hath his Rod to whip such, no sweet-meats of joy and peace to entertain them withall in that plight.

Thirdly, As for those which do walk close to the Rule of the Gospel (I mean, by a sincere endeavour) and thou seest no such peace and comfort (as we speak of) that they have: I answer.

First, They may have it, and thou not know it. The Saints joy and peace, is not such a light gigling joy as the Worlds; *Res seve-
ra verum gaudium*. The Parlor wherein the Spirit of Christ entertains the Christian, is an inner Room, not next the street, for every one that goes by, to smell the Feast. *The stranger
intermeddles not with his joy*, Prov. 14. 10. Christ and the soul may be at Supper within, and thou not so much as see one Dish go in, or hear the Musick that sounds so sweetly in the Christians ears; perhaps thou thinkest he wants peace, because he doth not hang out a sign in his countenance of the joy and peace he hath within. Alas poor wretch! may not the Saint have a peaceful Conscience with a solemn, yea, sad countenance, as well as thou and thy Companions have a sorrowful heart, when there is nothing but fair weather in your faces? *In laughter the heart is
sorrowful*, Prov. 14. 13. Sure he means the wicked mans laughter. It never looks more like Rain with them, than when it shines; their Conscience lowers, when their face laughs; so on the contrary, never more inward peace and comfort to be found in a Saints bosom, than sometimes when his face is blubberd with tears; shouldst thou come in and hear the Christian bemoaning himself, and complaining with sighs and sob's of his sins against God, thou wouldst go home, and cry out of this melancholly Religion, & the sad condition this man was in: And yet he whom thou so pitiest can desire thee to save it for thy self, and not spend it in vain for him; who would not part with that very sorrow (that scares thee so much) for all the joy which the World with all its gallantry, (when best set forth) could afford. There is a mystery in this sorrow thou canst not unriddle; know therefore there is a sorrow and anguish of heart which ariseth from the guilt of sin, and the fearful apprehensions of Gods wrath due to sin; and another

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that flows not from fear of wrath arising from guilt, but from the sense of sins inbeing in the Soul, that provokes the Christian to do that which is dishonourable to that God, who hath pardoned his sins to him; and this is the sorrow which sometimes makes the Saints go for sad uncomfortable creatures; when at the same time their hearts are as full of comfort from the sense of Gods pardoning mercy, as they can hold. This sorrow, is but like a Summer showre, melted by the sense of Gods love, as that by the warm Sun, and leaves the soul (as that doth a garden of sweet flowers) on which it falls more fresh and odoriferous.

Secondly, Though some precious Souls that have closed with Christ, and embraced the Gospel, be not at present brought to rest in their own consciences, but continue for a while under some dissatisfactions and troubles in their own spirits; yet even then they have peace of conscience in a threefold respect. *In precio, in promisso, in semine.*

First, Every true Believer hath peace of conscience *in precio*; the Gospel puts that price into his hand, which will assuredly purchase it, and that is the blood of Christ; we say, *that is gold, which is worth gold*, which we may any where exchange for gold; such is the blood of Christ; 'tis peace of conscience, because the soul that hath this, may exchange it for this. God himself cannot deny the poor creature, that prays on these terms. Lord give me peace of conscience, here's Christs blood the price of it. That which could pay the debt, surely can procure the receit. Peace of conscience is but a discharge under God his hand, that the debt due to Divine Justice is fully paid; the blood of Christ hath donethat the greater for the Believer, it shall therefore do this the less. If there were such a rare potion, that did infallibly procure health to every one that takes it, we might safely say, as soon as the sick man hath drunk it down, that he hath drunk his health; it is in him; though at present he doth not feel himself to have it; in time it will appear.

Secondly, In promisso. Every true Believer hath peace of conscience in the promise, and that we count as good as ready money in the purse, which we have sure Bond for, *Psal. 29. 11. The Lord will bless his people with peace.* He is resolv'd on it, and then who shall hinder it? 'tis worth your reading the whole *Psalme*, to see what weight the Lord gives to this sweet promise, for the encouragement

agement of our faith in expecting the performance thereof; nothing more hard to enter into the heart of a poor creature (when all is in an uproar in his bosom, and his Conscience threatening nothing but fire and sword, wrath and vengeance from God for his sins) than thoughts or hopes of peace and comfort. Now the *Psalm* is spent in shewing what great things God can do, and that with no more trouble to himself than a word speaking. *The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of Majesty*, ver. 4. *It breaks the Cedars, it divides the flames, it shakes the wilderness, it makes the hinds to calve.* This God that doth all this, promiseth to bless his people with peace, outward and inward; for without this inward peace, though he might give them peace, yet could he never bless them with peace as he there undertakes. A sad peace (were it not) to have quiet streets, but cutting of throats in our Houses? yet infinitely more sad, to have peace both in our streets and Houses, but war and blood in our guilty Consciences; what peace can a poor Creature taste or relish, while the Sword of Gods wrath lies at the throat of Conscience, not peace with God himself? Therefore Christ purchased peace of pardon, to obtain peace of Conscience for his pardoned ones; And accordingly hath bequeathed it in the promise to them. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you*, Joh. 14. 27. Where you see he is both the Testator to leave, and the Executor of his own Will, to give out with his own hands, what his love hath left Believers; so that there is no fear, but his Will shall be perform'd to the full, seeing himself lives to see it done.

Thirdly, In sowing. Every Believer hath this inward peace in the seed. *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart*, Psal. 97. 11. where sown, but in the furrows of the Believers own bosom, when principles of grace and holiness were cast into it by the Spirit of God? hence it is called *the peaceable fruit of righteousness*, Heb. 12. 11. it shoots as naturally from holiness, as any fruit in its kind doth from the seed proper to it. It is indeed most true, that this seed runs and ripens into this fruit sooner in some, than it doth in others. This spiritual Harvest comes not alike soon to all, no more than the other that is outward doth; but here's the comfort, whoever hath a season of grace pass over his soul, shall have his Harvest-time also of joy; this Law God hath bound himself to, as strongly as for the other,

which are not to cease while the earth remaineth, Gen. 8. 22. yea, more strongly, for that was to the World in general, not to every particular Countrey, Town or Field in these, which may want a Harvest, and yet God keep his Word; but God cannot perform his promise, if any one particular Saint should everlastingly go without his reaping time. *He that goeth forth bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him, Psal. 126. 6.* And therefore, you who think so basely of the Gospel, and the Professors of it, because at present their peace and comfort is not come; know it is on the way to them, and comes to stay everlastingly with them, whereas your peace is going from you every moment, and is sure to leave you without any hope of returning to you again. Look not how the Christian begins, but ends; The Spirit of God by his convictions comes into the soul with some terrors, but it closeth with peace and joy. As we say of the Month of *March*, it enters like a *Lion*, but goes out like a *Lamb*. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace, Psal. 37. 36.*

S E C T. III.

3. This reproves those, that think to heal their consciences with other than Gospel-balm; who leave the waters of living comfort that flow from this fountain open'd in the Gospel by Christ, to draw their peace and comfort out of Cisterns of their own hewing, and they are two; A carnal Cistern, and a legal Cistern.

I. First, Some think to draw their peace out of a carnal Cistern. There is not more variety of plaisters and foolish medicines used for the cure of the ague of the body, than there is of carnal receipts used by self-deceiving sinners to rid themselves of the shaking ague, which the fear of Gods wrath brings upon their guilty consciences; some, if they be but a little awakened by the Word, and they feel their hearts chill within them, from a few serious thoughts of their wretched undone condition, fall to *Felix* his physick; who, as soon as his conscience began to be sick at *Pauls* Sermon, had enough of the Preacher, and made all the haste

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he could to get that unpleasing noise out of his head, *Acts 24.* *Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way.* Thus many turn their back off God, run as far as they can, from those Ordinances, that company, or any thing else that is likely to grate upon their consciences, and revive the thoughts of their deplored state, which all their care is to forget; such a one I have heard of, that would not be present at any Funeral; could not bear the sight of his own grey hairs, and therefore used a black-lead-comb to discolour them, least by these, the thoughts of death (which he so abhor'd) should crowd in upon him. A poor cowardly shift (God knows) yet all that this wretch had, and many more have betwixt them, and a Hell above ground in their Consciences. Others, their light is so strong, and glares on them so constantly, that, this will not do, but wherever they go, though they hear not a Sermon in a Month, look not on a Bible in a Year, and keep far enough from such company as would awake their Consciences, yet they are haunted with their own guilt; and therefore, they do not only go from the presence of the Lord, as Cain did, *Gen. 4. 16.* But as he also made diversion of those musing thoughts which gathered to his guilty conscience, by employing them another way in building a City, *ver. 17.* so do they labour to give their consciences the slip in a crowd of worldly businesses. This is the great *Leviathan* that swallows up all the thoughts of Heaven and Hell in many mens hearts. They are so taken up with that project and this, that conscience finds them not at leisure to exchange a few words with them of a long time together. Conscience is as much huncht at, and spighted among sinners, as *Joseph was among the Patriarchs.* That which conscience tells them, likes them no better than *Josephs* dream did his Brethren; and this makes many play the Merchants with their consciences, as they did with him; which they do by bribing it with the profits of the World. But this, physick is found too weak also; and therefore *Sauls* harp, and *Nabals* Feast is thought on by others; with these they hope to drown their cares, and lay their raving consciences asleep, like some ruffian that is under an arrest for debt, and hath no way, but now to Prison he must go, except he can make the Serjeant drunk in whose hand he is, which he doth, and so makes an escape. Thus many besot their conscience with the brutish pleasures of sin; and when they have laid it as fast asleep in senseless stupidity, as

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one that is dead drunk, then they may sin without controll, till it wakes again. This is the height of that peace, which any carnal Receipt can help the sinner unto, to give a sleeping potion, that shall bind up the senses of Conscience for a while, in which time the wretch may forget his misery, as the condemned man doth when he is asleep, but as soon as it awakes, the horror of his condition is sure again to affright him worse than before. God keep you all from such a cure for your troubles of Conscience, which is a thousand times worse than the disease it self. Better to have a Dog that will by his barking, tell us a Thief is in our Yard, than one that will sit still, and let us be rob'd, before we have any notice of our danger.

2.

Secondly, Some draw their peace of Conscience from a legal Cistern; all the comfort they have, is from their own righteousness, this good work, and that good duty they bless themselves in, when any qualm comes over their hearts; the cordial drink, which they use to revive and comfort themselves with, is drawn not from the satisfaction which Christ by his death hath given to God for them poor sinners; but from the righteousness of their own lives; nor from Christs intercession in Heaven for them, but their own good prayers on earth for themselves; in a word, when any spark of disquiet kindles in their Consciences (as it were strange, if where so much combustible matter is, there should not at one time or other, some smothering fire begin in such a ones bosom) then, not Christs blood, but their own tears are cast on to quench it. Well, whoever thou art that goest this way to work to obtain peace of Conscience, I accuse thee as an enemy to Jesus Christ and his Gospel. If any herb could be found growing in thy garden to heal the wounds of thy Conscience; why did the Lord Christ commend for such a rarity, the balm which he came from Heaven on purpose to compound with his own blood? why doth he call sinners from all besides himself as comforters of no value, and bid us come to him, as ever we would find rest for our souls? *Mat. 11. 28.* No, know poor creature, & believe it (while the knowing of it may do thee good) Either Christ was an Impostor, and the Gospel a Fable, which I hope thou art not such an Infidel (worse than the Devil himself) to believe; or else thou takest not the right method of healing thy Conscience wounded for sin, and laying a sure bottom for solid

lid peace in thy bosom ; prayers and tears (Repentance I mean) good works and duties, these are not to be neglected ; nay, thou canst never have peace without them in thy Conscience, yet these do not, cannot procure this peace for thee, because they cannot thy peace with God ; And peace of Conscience is nothing but the eccho of pardoning mercy, which sounding in the Conscience, brings the soul into a sweet rest with the pleasa musick it makes. And the eccho is but the same voyce repeated ; so that if prayers and tears, good duties and good works, cannot procure our peace of pardon, then not our peace of comfort. I pray remember I said, you can never have inward peace without these ; and yet not have it by these. A wound would hardly ever cure, if not wrapt up from the open Aire, and also kept clean ; yet not these, but the balm cures it. Cease therefore not from praying, and the exercise of any other holy exercise of grace or duty ; but from expecting thy peace and comfort to grow from their root, or else thou shalt it thy self, out from having any benefit of that true peace which the Gospel offers. The one resists the other, like those two famous Rivers in Germany, whose streams when they meet, will not mingle together. Gospel-peace will not mingle and incorporate (as I may so say) with any others ; thou must drink it pure and unmixt, or have none at all. We (saith holy Paul for himself, and all other sincere Believers) *are the Circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have unconfidence in the flesh, Phil. 3. 3.* As if he had said, we are not short of any in holy duties and services ; nay, we exceed them, for *we worship God in the Spirit* ; but this is not the Tap from whence we draw our joy and comfort ; we *rejoyce (fiducially) in Christ Jesus, not in the flesh*, where that which he called worshipping God in the Spirit, now in opposition to Christ, and rejoycing in him, he calls flesh.

SECT. IV.

They are to be reprove d from hence, who do indeed use the balm of the Gospel, for the healing Conscience-wounds ; but they use it very unevangelically. The matter they bottom their peace and comfort on, is right and good, Christ and the mercy of

of God thorough him in the promise to poor sinners; what can be said better? But they do not observe Gospel-rule and order in the applying it. They snatch the promise presumptuously, force and ravish it, rather than seek to have Christ's consent; Like *Saul*, who was in such haste, that he could not stay till *Samuel* came to sacrifice for him, but boldly falls to work before he comes; flat against order given him. Thus many are so hot upon having comfort, that they will not stay for the Spirit of God to come and sprinkle their consciences with the blood of Christ in Gospel-order; but profanely do it themselves, by applying the comfort of those promises which indeed at present does not belong to them. O Sirs, can this do well in the end? should he consult well for his health, that will not stay for the *Dollors* direction, but runs into the *Apothecaries* shop, and on his own Head takes his Physick without the counsel of the Physitian, how to prepare it, or himself, for the taking of it? This every profane wretch doth that lives in sin, and yet sprinkles himself with the blood of Christ, and blesseth himself in the pardoning mercy of God; but let such know, that as the blood of the *Paschal Lamb*, was not struck on the *Egyptians* doors, but the *Israelites*; so neither is the blood of Christ to be sprinkled on the obstinate sinner, but sincere penitent. Nay further, as that blood was not to be spilt on the threshold of an *Israelites* door (where it might be trampled on) but on the side-posts; so neither is the blood of Christ to be applied to the Believer himself, while he lies in any sin unrepented of, for his present comfort. This were indeed to throw it under his foot to be trod upon. *David* confesseth his sin with shame, before *Nathan* comforts him with the news of a pardon.



CHAP. X.

*Where we have a trial of our peace from four
Characters of Gospel-peace or Comfort.*

LET this Doctrine be as a touch-stone to try the truth of your peace and comfort; hath it a Gospel-stamp upon it? the Devil hath his false mint of comfort as well as of grace; put thy self therefore to the tryal, while I shall lay before you some characters of the peace that Christ in his Gospel speaks to his people.

First, Gospel-comfort may be known by the vessel it is poured into, which is a broken heart. The promise is superscribed by name to such, and such only; *Esay 57. 15. I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* Christ's commission from his Father binds him up; he can comfort none besides, *Esay 61. 1. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings in the week; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted; and what he receives himself from the Father, the same he gives to those he sends upon the same errand; First, his Spirit, concerning whom he tells his Disciples, that the Comforter when he is come, shall convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, Joh. 16. 7. Mark; First, of sin, and as for his inferiour messengers, they have direction, to whom they are to apply the comforts of the Gospel. *Esay 35. 3. strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirme the feeble knees; say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not. And upon their peril be it, if they poure this ointment**

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upon the head of an unhumbléd sinner ; to give such any comfort, *by promising life to him* as he is, God protests against it ; he calls it a lye ; a *strengthening the hands of the wicked* ; and as much as in them lies, by blowing him up with a false comfort, to make sure that he shall never have the true peace. Thus you see the order of the Gospel in comforting souls. As in needle-work, the sad ground-work is laid before the beautiful colours ; as the statuary cuts and carves his statue before he gilds it ; so doth the Spirit of Christ begin with sadness, ends in joy ; first cuts and wounds, then heals and over-lays the soul with comfort and peace. I hope you do not think I limit the holy one in his workings to the same degree and measure in all. I have open'd my thoughts in another place concerning this : but so far the convincing, humbling work of the Spirit goes in every soul before peace and comfort comes, as to empty the soul of all her false comforts and confidences which she had laid up ; that the heart becomes like a vessel whose bottom is beat out, and all the water it held, thereby spilt and let out, the sins it loved, now it hates, the hopes and comfort it pleased it self with, they are gone, and the creature left in a desolate, solitary condition ; no way now it sees, but perish it must, except Christ be her friend, and interpose betwixt hell and it ; to him she therefore makes her moan, as willing to follow his counsel, and to be ordered by his direction, as ever Patient was by his Physician, of whose skill and care he is thoroughly satisfied ; This I call the broken heart, which if you be wholly strangers to, your acquaintance is to begin with Gospel-peace. I beseech you rest not till you have an answer from your consciences, what is it they say ? was your wine once water ? doth your light arise out of darkness ? is your peace the issue of a soul-conflict & trouble ? did you bleed before you were healed ? you may hope 'tis a kindly work of Gods gracious Spirit ; make much of it, and bless thy God that hath given this wine to cheer thy sad heart. But if thou commencest *per saltem*, hast thy wine, before thy pots were filled with water ? thy morning be come, before thou hast had thy evening ; thy peace be settled, before thy false peace is broken ; thy conscience sound and whole ; before it is lanced, and the putrid stuff of thy pride, carnal confidence, and other sins thou hast lived in, be let out, thou mayst have some ease for a while ; but know it, the Lord Jesus denies it to be his cure.

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The strong mans house is kept in peace, Luke 11. 21. as well as the good-mans. It requires more power to work true sorrow, than false joy and peace; a happier man thou wouldst be; if mourning in the distress of a troubled conscience, than dance about this Idol, peace, which the Devil thy sworn enemy mocks thee withal.

2. Gospel-peace is obtain'd in a Gospel-way, and that is two-fold.

First, in a way of obedience and holy walking, Gal. 6. 16. *As many as walk by this rule, peace be on them.* Now this rule you may see, v. 15. to be the rule of the new creature. And what is that, but the holy rule of the Word? to which the principles of grace planted in the soul of a believer are so fitted, that there is not a more con-natural agreement betwixt the eye and light, than betwixt the disposition of this new nature in a Saint, and the rule of holiness in the Word. Now, it is not enough for one to be a new creature, and to have a principle of grace in his bosome, but he must actually walk by this rule, or else hee'll be to seek for true peace in his conscience. No comfort in the Saints is to be found, but what the Comforter brings. And he who commands us to *withdraw from them* (though our brethren) *that walk disorderly*, 2 Thes. 3. 9. will himself surely withdraw from such, and withhold his comforts, so long as they are disorderly walkers; which they are as long as they walk besides this rule. And therefore if thou be such a one, say not the Spirit brought thy comfort to thy hand, for he would not bid thee good-speed in an evil way; No, he hath been withdrawn as a Comforter ever since thou hast with-drawn thy foot from walking by the holy rule. All thy peace which thou pretendst to have in this time, is base-born: and thou hast more cause to be ashamed of it, than glory in it. It is little credit to the wife, that she hath a child when her husband is abroad, and cannot father it; and as little to pretend to comfort, when the Spirit of Christ will not own it.

Secondly, Gospel peace is given in to the soul in a way of duty, and close attendance on God in his Ordinances. *Now the Lord of peace give you peace always, by all means*, 2 Thes. 3. 16. That is, blest all means for comforting and filling your souls with inward peace, so that he that drives no trade in Ordinances, and brags of

his peace and comfort, speaks enough to bring the truth of it into suspicion; in the thoughts of sober Christians. I know God can by immediate illapses of his spirit comfort the Christian; and save him the labour of hearing, praying, meditating; but where did he say he would? why may we not expect a harvest, as well without sowing and plowing, as peace without using the means? If we were like *Israel* in the wilderness; in such a state and posture, wherein the means is cut from us, and not by pride or sloth put from us; as sometimes it is the Christians condition; he is sick, and knock't off from Ordinances; or by some other providence as pressing he is shut out from the help of this means or that; now I should not wonder to see comfort lie as thick in his soul, as *Manna* about the *Israelites* tents; but as God would not ruin bread any longer, when once they had corn, of which with their labour they might make bread, *Josh. 5. 11, 12.* so neither will the Lord comfort by a miracle, when the soul may have it in an Ordinance. God could have taught the *Eunuch*, and satisfied him with light from heaven; and never have sent for *Philip* to preach to him. But he chooseth to do it out of *Philip's* mouth; rather than immediately out of his own, no doubt to put honour on his Ordinance.

5.

Thirdly, Gospel-peace in the conscience, it is strengthening and restorative; it makes the Christian strong to fight against sinne and Satan; the Christian is revived, and finds his strength come, upon a little tasting of this honey; but O what a slaughter doth he make of his spiritual enemies, when he hath a full meal of this honey, a deep draught of this wine? now he goes like a Gyant refreshed with wine into the field against them. No lust can stand before him; it makes him strong to work. O how *Paul* laid about him for Christ? he laboured more abundantly than them all. The good man remembered what a wretch he once was, and what mercy he had obtained; the sense of this love of God lay so glowing at his heart, that it inspired him with a zeal for God above his fellow-Apostles. This made holy *David* pray so hard to drink again of this wine, which so long had been lock't up from him. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit: Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee, *Psal. 51. 12, 13.* Pray mark, it was not his liquorish palate after the sweet taste of this wine.

wine of comfort, that was the only or chief reason why he so long'd for it; but the admirable vertue he knew in it, to inspirit and empower him with zeal for God; whereas the false peace and comfort of hypocrites is more heady than hearty; it leaves them as weak as they were before; yea, it lies rotting, like unwholsom food in the stomach, and leaves a surfeit in their souls, (as luscious summer-fruits do in the bodies of men) which soon breaks out in loose practices. Thieves commonly spend their money as ill as they get it; and so do hypocrites and formalists their stolen comforts; stay but a little, and you shall finde them feasting some lust or other with them. *I have peace-offerings with me,* (saith the religious Whore, the hypocritical harlot) *this day I have paid my vows, therefore came I forth to meet thee,* Prov. 7. 14, 15. she pacifies her conscience, and comforts her self with this religious service she performs; and now having (as she thought), quit scores with God, she returns to her own lustful trade; yea, emboldens her self from this in her wickednesse; *Therefore came I forth to meet thee;* as if she durst not have plaid the Whore with man, till she had plaid the hypocrite with God, and stoppt the mouth of her conscience with her peace-offering. Look therefore I beseech you very carefully what effect your peace and comfort have in your hearts and lives. Are you the more humble or proud for your comfort? do you walk more closely or loosely after your peace? how stand you to duties of worship? are you made more ready for communion with God in them, or do you grow strange to and infrequent in them? have you more quickning in them, or lie more formal and lifelesse under them? In a word, can you shew that grace and peace grow in thee alike? or doth the one lesse appear, since thou dost more pretend to the other? by this thou mayst know whether thy peace comes from the Peace-maker, or peace-marrer, from the God of truth, or father of lies.

Fourthly, Gospel-peace comforts the soul, and that strongly, when it hath no other comfort to mingle with it. It is a cordial rich enough in self, and needs not any other ingredient to be compounded with it. *David singles God out by himself; Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee,* Psal. 73. 25. Give David but his God, and let who will take all besides; let him alone to live comfortably, may he but have.

have his love and favour. Hence it is that the Christians peace pays him in the greatest revenues of joy and comfort, when outward enjoyments contribute least, yea, nothing at all, but bring in matter of trouble. *But David encouraged himself in his God,* 1 Sam. 30. 6. you know when that was; if *David's* peace had not been right and sound, he would have been more troubled to think of God at such a time, than of all his other disasters. *Great peace have they which love thy Law; and nothing shall offend them,* Psal. 119. 165. This distinguisheth the Saints peace both from the worldlings and the hypocrites.

First, from the worldlings, his peace and comfort (poor wretch) runs dregs as soon as creature enjoyments run a tilt; when poverty, disgrace, sickness, or any thing else crosseth him, in that which he fondly doted on, then his night is come, and day shut up in dismal darknesse. In which respect it is, that *Christ* (as I conceive) opposeth his peace to the worlds, *John* 14. 27. *My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* Pray mark, *Christ* is laying in Arguments of comfort for his Disciples against his departure, which he knew would go so near their hearts. One amongst the rest, is taken from the difference of that peace and comfort which he leaves them, from what the world gives: as if he had said, If the peace and comfort you have from me, lay in such things as the worlds peace is made up of, plenty, ease, outward prosperity, and carnal joy, truly then you had reason to be the greatest mourners at my funeral, that ever followed friend to the grave; for after my departure, you are like to have none of these; nay, rather expect trouble and persecution. But know, the peace I left with you, is not in your houses, but hearts; the comfort I give you lies not in silver and gold, but in pardon of sin, hopes of glory and inward consolations which the Comforter that is to come from me to dwell with you, shall, upon my appointment, pay into your bosoms; and this shall out-live all the worlds joy. This is such a legacy as never any left their children. Many a father dying, hath in a farewell speech to his children, wish't them all peace and comfort when he should be dead and gone; but who besides *Jesus Christ* could send a Comforter into their hearts, and thrust peace and comfort into their bosomes?

Again,

Again, it distinguisheth the true Christians peace from the hypocrites, who, though he pretends to place his comfort not in the creatures, but in God; and seems to take joy in the interest, which he lays claim to have in Christ and the precious promises of the Gospel; yet when it comes indeed to the trial, that he sees all his creature-comforts gone, and not like to return any more, (which at this time had his heart, though he would not it should be thought so) and now he sees he must in earnest into another world, to stand or fall eternally, as he shall then be found in Gods own scrutiny to have been sincere or false-hearted in his pretensions to Christ and his grace; Truly then his thoughts recoil, his conscience flies in his face, and reproacheth him for spiritual couzenage and forgery. Now soul speak, is it thus with thee? does thy peace go with thee just to the prison door, and there leave thee? art thou confident thy sins are pardoned all the while thou art in health and strength, but as soon as ever the Sergeant knocks at the door to speak with thee, (death I mean comes in thy sight) then thy thoughts alter, and thy conscience tels thee, he comes to prove thee a liar in thy pretended peace and joy? this is a sad symptom. I know indeed that the time of affliction is a trying time to grace that is true; The sincere Christian for awhile may (like a valiant souldier) be beat from his artillery; and the enemy Satan may seem to possesse his peace and confidence; yea, so far have some precious Saints been carried down the stream of violent temptations, as to question whether their former comforts were from the holy Spirit the Comforter, or the evil spirit the deceiver; yet there is great difference between the one and the other.

First, they differ in their causes, this darknesse which sometimes is upon the sincere Christians spirit in deep distress, comes from the withdrawing of God his lightsome countenance; but the horror of the other from his own guilty conscience, that before was lulld byd asleep with prosperity, but now being awakened by the hand of God on him, doth accuse him to have been false with God in the whole course of his profession. It is true, some particular guilt may be contracted by the Christian through negligence, or strong temptation in his Christian course; for which his conscience may accuse him, and may farther embitter the present desertion he is in so farre, as from those particular miscarriages.

riages to fear his sincerity in the rest, though he hath no reason to do it: but his conscience cannot charge him of an hypocritical design, to have been the spring that hath set him on work through the whole course of his profession.

Secondly, there is something concomitant with the Christians present darknesse of spirit, that distinguisheth it from the hypocrites horror; and that is the lively working of grace, which then commonly is very visible, when his peace and former comfort are most questioned by him; the lesse joy he hath from any present sense of the love of God, the more abounding you shall find him in sorrow for his sin, that clouded his joy; The further Christ is gone out of his sight, the more he clings in his love to Christ, and vehemently cries after him in prayer, as we see in *He-man*, *Psal. 88. 13. Unto thee have I cried O Lord, and in the morning shall my prayers prevent thee.* O the fervent prayers that then are shot from his troubled spirit to heaven, the pangs of affection, which are springing after God: and his face and favour! Never did banisht child more desire admittance into his angry fathers presence, than he to have the light of Gods countenance shine on him, which is now veiled from him. Oh how he searcheth his heart, studies the Scripture, wrestles with God for to give him that grace, the non-evidence of which at present, makes him so question the comforts he hath formerly had; might he but have true grace, he will not fall out with God for want of comfort, though he stays for it till the other world. Never did any woman big with child long more to have the child in her arms that is at present in her womb, than such a soul doth to have that grace which is in his heart (but through temptation question'd by him at present) evidenced to him in the truth of it. Whereas the hypocrite in the midst of all his horror doth not, cannot (till he hath a better heart put into his bosome) cordially love or desire grace and holinesse, for any intrinsecal excellency in it self; only as an expedient for escaping the tormentors hand, which he sees he is now falling into.

They differ in the issue. The Christian, he like a star in the heavens, wades through the cloud, that for a time hides his comfort; but the other, like a Meteor in the aire, blazeth a little: and then drops into some ditch or other, where it is quenched; or as the Spirit of God distinguisheth them,

Prov.

Prov. 13. 9. The light of the righteous rejoyleth, but the lamp (or candle as in the Hebr.) of the wicked is put out; the sincere Christians joy and comfort is compared there to the light of the Sun, that is climbing higher, while it is muffled up with clouds from our eye; and by and by, when it breaks out more gloriously, doth rejoyce over those mists and clouds, that seem'd to obscure it; but the joy of the wicked, like a candle, wastes and spends (being fed with gross fuel of outward prosperity, which in a short time fails) and the wretch his comfort goes out in a snuff at last, past all hope of being lighted again. The Christians trouble of spirit again is compared to a swooning fainting fit, which he within awhile recovers, Psal. 40. A qualm comes over the holy mans heart from the thought of his sins in the day of his great distress, ver. 12. Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me. But before the Psalm is at an end, after a few deep groans in prayer (ver. 13, 14:) he comes again to himself, and acts his faith strongly on God, ver. 17. Yet the Lord thinketh on me; thou art my help and my deliverer. But, the Hypocrites confidence and hope, when once it begins to sink and falter, it dies and perisheth, Job 11. 20. The eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.

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CHAP. XL

That the Gospel alone can unite the hearts of men together in true peace, and how the Gospel doth

WE come now to the third kind of peace, which I called a peace of love and unity. A heavenly grace this is, where-

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by the minds and hearts of men, that even now jarred, and rang backwards, are made tunable each to other, so as to Chime all in, to an harmonious consent and concord among themselves. Thus peace in Scripture is frequently taken, as you may see, *Mar. 9. 30. Heb. 13. 14. 1 Thes. 5. 13.* Now, the Gospel is a Gospel of peace, if taken in this notion also, which we shall briefly speak to from this Note,

Note.

That the Gospel, and only the Gospel, can knit the hearts and minds of men together in a solid peace and love. This (next the reconciling us to God and our selves) is especially designed by Christ in the Gospel; and truly those without this, would not fill up the Saints happiness, except God should make a Heaven for every Christian by himself to live in. *John Baptists Ministry* (which was as it were the Preface to, and brief Contents of the Gospel) was divided into these two Heads; *To turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, Luk. 1. 16. and to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, v. 17.* That is, to make them friends with God, and one another. This is the natural effect of the Gospel, where it is powerfully and sincerely embraced; to unite and endear the hearts of men and women in love and peace together, how contrary soever they were before. This is the strange *Metamorphosis*, which the Prophet speaks shall be under the Gospel, *Isa. 11. 8. The Wolfe shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lie down with the Kid.* That is, men and women, between whom there was as great feud and enmity, as is betwixt those creatures; they shall yet sweetly agree, and lie in one anothers bosoms peaceably; and how all this, but by the efficacy of the Gospel on their hearts? so *ver. 9. For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.* Indeed it is in the dark when men fight; and draw upon one another in wrath and fury; if Gospel-light comes once savingly in, the Sword will soon be put up; the sweet Spirit of love will not suffer these doings where he dwells, and so peculiar is this blessing to the Gospel, that Christ appoints it for the badge and cognizance by which they should not only know one another, but even strangers should be able to know them from any other sect and sort of men in the World, *John 13. 35. By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, that ye love one another.* A Noble mans servant is known as far as he can well be seen, by the

the Coat on his back, whose man he is; so saith Christ, shall all men know you, by your mutual love, that you retain to me and my Gospel. If we would judge curiously of Wine, what is its natural relish, we must taste of it, before it comes into the Hucksters hands, or after it is refined from its lees; so the best way to judge of the Gospel, and the fruit it bears, is to taste of it either when it was profest and embraced with most simplicity, and that was without doubt in the first promulgation; or, secondly, when it shall have its full effect on the hearts of men, and that is in Heaven; in both these, though chiefly the last, this peace will appear to be the natural fruit of the Gospel.

First, When the Gospel was first preached and embraced, what a sweet harmony of peace, and admirable oneness of heart was then amongst the holy Professors of it, who but a while before were either meer strangers to, or bitter enemies one against another? They lived and loved, as if each Christians heart had forsaken his own, to creep into his brothers bosom. They alienated their Estates, to keep their love entire; they could give their bread out of their own mouths, to put it into their Brethrens that were hungry; yea, when their love to their fellow Christians was most costly and heavy, it was least grutcht and felt by them; see those blessed souls, *Acts 2. 46.* They sold their possessions and goods, and parted to all men, as every one had need; and they continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking of bread from house to house, did eat their bread with gladness, and singleness of heart. More, they are more merry now they have been emptying of their bags by charity, than if they had come from filling them by worldly traffique. So notorious was the love of Christians in the Primitive times, that the very Heathens would point at them, as *Tertullian* saith, and say, See how they love one another; And therefore, if less love and peace be found now amongst Christians, the blame lies not on the Gospel, but them; the Gospel is as peaceful, but they are *minus Evangelici*, less Evangelical, as we shall further shew.

Secondly, Look on the Gospel as at last in the complement of all in Heaven; when the hearts of Saints shall be thoroughly Gospelized, & the promises concerning the peaceable state of Saints have their full accomplishment; then above all, this peace of

the Gospel will appear. Here it put out, and in, like a budding flower in the Spring, which one warm day opens a little, and another that is cold and sharp shuts again. *The silence in this lower Heaven* (the Church on earth) is but for the space of half an hour, *Rev. 8.1.* Now there is love and peace among Christians; anon scandals are given, and differences arise, which drive this sweet spring back; but in Heaven it is full blown, and so continues to eternity. There dissenting Brethren are made through friends, never to fall out; there, not only the wound of contention is cured, but the scar which is here oft left upon the place, is not to be seen on the face of Heavens peace, to disfigure the beauty of it, which made that *German Divine* so long to be in Heaven, where, said he, *Luther and Zuinglius* are perfectly agreed, though they could not on earth.

But I come to give some particular account how the Gospel knits the hearts and minds of men in peace together, and why the Gospel alone can do this; while I clear one, I shall the other also.

First, The Gospel knits the hearts of men together, as it propounds powerful Arguments for peace and unity; and indeed such as are found no where else. It hath cords of love to draw and bind souls together, that were never weav'd in natures Loom; such as we may run through all the *Topicks* of Morality, and meet with none of them, being all supernatural, and of Divine revelation, *Eph. 4. 3.* The *Apostle* exhorts them to *keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.* And how doth he perswade them, *v. 5, 6, 7.* First, *there is one body*, but such a one as *natural Philosophy* treats not of; but a mystical one, the *Church*, which consists of several Saints, as the natural body of several members; and as it were strange to see one member to fall out with another, which are all preserved in life by their union together; so much more in the mystical body. Again, *one spirit*, that is the same holy Spirit, which quickens them all that are the Saints, and is to the whole number of Saints, as the soul is to the whole man, informing every part. Now as it were a prodigious violence to the Law of Nature, if the members by an intestine War among themselves, should drive the soul out of the body, which gives life to them in union together; so much more would it be for Christians to force the holy Spirit from them, by their contentions.

tentions & strifes; as indeed a wider door cannot easily be opened for him to go out at. Again, it presseth unity, from the *one hope of our calling*, where hope is put *prosperata*; the blis we all hope for in Heaven; there is a day coming, and it cannot be far from us, in which we shall meet lovingly in Heaven, and sit at one Feast, without grutching one to see what lies on anothers trencher; full fruition of God shall be the Feast, and peace and love, the sweet musick that shall sound to it; and what folly is it for us to fight here, who shall feast there? draw blood of one another here, that shall so quickly lie in each others bosoms? Now the Gospel invites to this Feast, and calls us to this hope. I might run through the other particulars, which are all as purely Evangelical, as these, *one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism*, but enough to have given you a taste.

Secondly, The Gospel doth this, as it takes away the cause of that feud and enmity, which is among the sons and daughters of men, and they chiefly two. The curse of God on them, and their own lusts in them.

First, The feud and hostility that is among men and women, is part of that curse, which lies upon mankind for his Apostasie from God. We read, *Gen. 3. 17.* How the ground was cursed for mans sake; *Thorns and thistles (shall it bring forth to thee)* (saith God.) But, a far greater curse it was, that one man should become as a thorn and bryar to fetch blood one of another. Some have a fancy, that the *Rose* grew in Paradiſe without prickles. To be ſure, man, had he not sinned, should never have been such a pricking bryar, as now the best of them is. These thorns that come up so thick in mans dogged, quarrelling Nature, what do they speak, but the efficacy of Gods curse? The first man that was born in the World, prov'd a Murderer; and the first that dyed, went to his Grave by that bloody Murderers hand; may we not wonder as much at the power of Gods curse on mans nature, that appeared so soon in *Cains* malicious heart, as they did at the sudden withering of the Fig-tree blasted by Christs curse? And truly, it was but just with God, to mingle a perverse spirit among them, who had expressed so false a one to him. They deserved to be confounded in their language, and suffer'd to bite and devour one another, who durst make an attempt upon God himself, by their disobedience; very observable is that in *Zeck. 11. 10.*

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compared with the fourteenth. When once the *staffe of beauty*, *ver. 10.* { which represented Gods Covenant with the Jewes } was asunder, then presently the *Staffe of hands*. (which signified the *brotherhood between Judah and Jerusalem*) was cut asunder also. When a people break Covenant with God, they must not expect peace among themselves; It is the wisdom of a Prince, if he can, to find his enemy work at home. As soon as man fell out with God, behold there is a fire of War kindled at his own door, in his own nature. No more bitter enemy now to mankind, than it self. One man is a Wolf, yea, a Devil to another. Now, before there can be any hope of true, solid peace among men, this curse must be reversed; and the Gospel, and only the Gospel can do that, where an expedient is found how the quarrel betwixt God and the sinner may be reconciled; which done, the curse ceaseth. A curse is a judiciary doom, whereby God in wrath condemns his Rebel-creature to something that is evil. *But there is no condemnation to him that is in Christ.* The curse is gone, no Arrow now in the Bow of threatening; that was shot into Christs heart, and can never enter into the Believers; God may whip his people, by some unbrotherly unkindness they receive one from anothers hands, by way of fatherly chastisement, (and indeed it is as sharp a Rod as he can use in his Discipline) the more to make them sensible of their falling out with him. But the curse is gone, and they under a promise of enjoying peace and unity, which they shall (when best for them) have performed to them.

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Secondly, The internal cause of all the hostility and feud that is to be found amongst men, is lust that dwells in their own bosoms; this is the principle and root that bears all the bitter fruit of strife and contention in the World, *Jam. 4. 1. From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?* This breaks the peace with God, our selves, and others. If there be a fiery exhalation wrapt up in the cloud, we must look for thunder and lightning to follow; if lust in the heart, it will vent it self, though it rends peace of Family, Church and Kingdom. Now, before there can be a foundation for a firm solid peace, these unruly lusts of men must be taken down. What peace and quiet can there be, while Pride, Envy, Ambition, Malice, and such like lusts, continue to

sit

(fit in throne, and hurry men at their pleasure? Neither will it be enough for the procuring peace, to restrain these unruly passions, and bind them up forcibly; if peace be not made between the hearts of men, it is worth nothing. The Chain that ties up the mad Dog, will in time wear; and so will all Cords break, by which men seem at present so strongly bound together, if they be not tied by the heart-strings, & the grounds of the quarrel be there taken away. Now the Gospel, and only the Gospel, can help us to a plaister, that can draw out of the heart the very core of contention and strife. Here the Apostle telling us how himself, and others his fellow Saints, got cure of that malicious heart, which once they were in bondage to, *Tit. 3. 3. We our selves were sometimes foolish and disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures; living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.* Well, what was the physick that recovered them? See ver. 4. *But after the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man, appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. As if he had said, had not this love of God to us in Christ appeared, and we been thus washed by his regenerating Spirit, we might have lain to this day under the power of those lusts, for all the help that any other could afford us. Mortification is a work of the Spirit, Rom. 8. 13. If through the Spirit, ye mortifie the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live.* And the Gospel is the sacrificing Knife in the hand of the Spirit; the Word it is called the Sword of the Spirit, as that which he useth to kill and slay sin with in the hearts of his people.

Thirdly, As the Gospel layes the Axe to the root of bitterness and strife, to stub that up; so it fills the hearts of those that embrace it, with such gracious principles, as incline to peace and unity; such are *self-denial*, that prefers another in honour before himself, and will not juggle for the wall. *Long-suffering*, a grace which is not easily moved and provoked; *Gentleness*, which if moved by any wrong, keeps the doors open for peace to come in at again; & makes him easy to be entreated. See a whole bundle of these sweet herbs growing in one bed, *Gal. 5. 22. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faith, meekness.* Mark I pray, this is not fruit that grows in every hedge;

but

but *fruit of the spirit*. Fruit that springs from Gospel-seed. As the stones in the quarry, and Cedars as they grow in the wood, would never have lain close and comely together in the Temple; so neither could the one cut and polish, nor the other hew and carve themselves into that fitness and beauty, which they all had in that stately Fabrick; No, that was the work of men gifted of God for that purpose; neither can men and women with all their skill and tools of morality, square and frame their hearts, so as to fall in lovingly together into one holy Temple; This is the work of the Spirit, and that also with this instrument, and chizel of the Gospel, to do, partly by cutting off the knottiness of our churlish natures, by his mortifying grace; as also carving, polishing, and smoothing them, with those graces which are the emanations of his own sweet, meek and holy Spirit.



CHAP. XII.

Wherein is shewn the difference between the peace that is among Saints; and which is among the wicked. The greatness of their sin, who are Ministers of peace, and yet stir up strife, and the reason why there is no more peace and unity among Saints in this life.

Use 1.

FIRST, This helps us what to think of that peace, and love, which sometimes is to be found among the wicked of the World. It is not true peace, and solid love, because they are strangers to the Gospel that alone can unite hearts together. What then shall we call

call this their peace? In some it is a meer conspiracy, Say ye not a confederacy to all them; to whom this people shall say a confederacy, Ely 8. 12. The peace of some is rather founded in wrath to the Saints, than love amongst themselves. They are united, but how? no other way than Sampson's Foxes, to do mischief to others, rather than good to themselves. Two Dogs that are worrying one another, can leave off to run both after a Hare that comes by them; who, when the Chase is over, can to it as fiercely as before. In the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themselves, Luk. 23. 12. Again, the peace and unity of others, is founded upon some base lust, that tyes them together; thus shall you see a knot of Good-fellows (as they miscall themselves) set over the Pot with abundance of seeming content in one another; and a pack of Thieves, when upon a wicked design, join and call one another together (as Partridges their fellows), saying, Come with us, cast in thy lot among us, let us all have one purse, Prov. 1. 14. Here how is peace and unity; but alas! they are only brethren in iniquity. Thirdly, where it is not thus gross, as it cannot indeed be denied but there are some that never felt the power of the Gospel, so as to be made new creatures by it, who yet hold very fair quatter one with another, and correspond together; and that not on so base, and sordid an account, among whom such offices of love are reciprocated, as do much sweeten their lives, and endear them one to another; and for this they are much beholden to the Gospel, which doth civilize oft, where it doth not sanctifie. But this is a peace so fundamentally defective, that it doth not deserve the name of true peace.

First, It is *in cortice, non in corde*; superficial and external, not inward and cordial; we may say, rather their lusts are chained from open War; than their hearts changed into inward love. As the Beasts agree in the Ark pretty well, yet keep their hostile nature, so do unregenerate men.

Secondly, 'Tis *unsanctified peace*. First, because while they seem to have peace with one another, they have not peace with God; and it is peace with God takes away the curse. Secondly, because it proceeds from unsanctified hearts; it is the Altar that sanctifies the gift; the heart, the

unity, *Amicitia non est nisi inter bonos*. A Heathen could say, true love and friendship can only be between good men; but alas he knew not what made a good man. When God intends in mercy to make the hearts of men *one*, he first makes them *new*, Ezek. 1. 18. *And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you*; the peace of the right kind, is a fruit of the Spirit, and that sanctifies before it unites. *Thirdly*, because the end that all such propound in their love is carnal, not spiritual. As *Austin* did not admire *Cicero* for his eloquence and oratory so much, as he did undervalue and pity him, because the Name of Jesus Christ was not to be found in him; so this draws a black line upon carnal mens peace and unity; nothing of God and Christ in it. Is it his glory they aim at? Christs command that binds them to the peace? No alas! here is the still voyce, but God is not in it; their own quier and carnal advantage is the *primmo mobile*; peace and unity are such good guests, and pay so well for their entertainment, that this makes men who have no grace. (if they have but their wits left) desirous to keep up an eternal peace among themselves.

In a word it is a peace that will not long last, because it wants a strong cement; stones may a while lie together without mortar, but not long. The only lasting cement for love, is the blood of Christ, as *Austin* saith of his friend *Alipius*, and himself. They were *sanguine Christi*. *Secondly*, Is the Gospel a Gospel of peace in this sense, as taken for unity and love? This dips their feet into a deep die, who abuse the Gospel to a quite contrary end; and make it their instrument to promote strife and contention withall; such the *Apostle* speaks of, *Phil. 1. 15*. *Some indeed preach Christ out of envy and strife*. The Gospel of peace is a strange Text, one would think to preach division, and raise strife from; and the Pulpit as strange a Mount for to plant the battering pieces of contention on. O how strangely do these men forget their Lord that sent them, who is a *Prince of peace*: And their work, which is not to blow a trumpet of sedition and confusion, or sound an alarm to battle, but rather a joyful Retreat from the bloody fight, wherein their lusts had engaged them against God and one another? Indeed, there is a War they are to proclaim; but tis only against sin and Satan; and I am sure we are not fit to march against them,

till.

till we can agree among our selves. What would the Prince think of that Captain, who instead of encouraging his Souldiers to fall on with united forces, as one man against the common enemy, should make a speech to set his Souldiers together by the ears among themselves: surely he would hang him up for a Traitor. Good was Luthers prayer, *A Doctore glorioso, a Pastore contentioso, & inuicilibus questionibus liberet Ecclesiam Deum.* From a vain glorious Doctor, a contentious Pastor, and vice questions, the Lord deliver his Church. And we in these sad times have reason to say as hearty an *Amin.* to it, as any since his Age. Do we not live in a time, when the Church is turned into a *Sophistry* School, where such a wrangling and jangling hath been, that the precious truths of the Gospel are lost already to many (whose eyes are put out with the dust these contentions have raised) and they have at last fairly disputed themselves out of all their former principles; as some ill-husbands that light among cunning Gamesters, and play all their money out of their purses. Or woe to such vile men, who have prostituted the Gospel to such Devilish ends. God may have mercy on the cheated souls to bring them back to the love of the truth. But for the cheaters, they are gone too far towards Hell, that we can look for their return.

Thirdly, This gives us the reason why there is no more peace and unity among the Saints themselves; the Gospel cannot be faulted, that breaths peace. No! it is not because they are Gospellers, but because they are but imperfectly Gospellized; that they are no more peaceful; the more they partake of the spirit of the Gospel, the less will they be haunted with the evil spirit of contention and strife. The best of Saints are in part unevangelical in two particulars; from which comes all the unkind quarrellings, and unbrotherly contests among them.

First, In their judgments, they know but in part, and prophesy but in part, 1 Cor. 13. 9. He that pretends to more, boasts without his measure, and doth thereby discover what he denies, his ignorance. (I mean in the Gospel.) And this defect and want, that is in the Saints judgment, exposes them sometimes to drink in principles that are not Evangelical. Now these are they that make the buble, and disturb their peace and unity. All truth is reducible to an unity; like lines they lovingly meet in one Centre,

the *God of truth*; and so are far from jussling and clashing, that (as stones in an Arch) they uphold one another. And they which so sweetly agree in one, cannot learn us to divide. No, it is *this stranger, Error*, that creeps in among the Saints, and will needs be Judge; this breaks the peace, and kindles a fire in the House, that in a while, if let alone, will be seen at the House-top. Wholefom food makes no disturbance to a healthful body; but corrupt food doth presently make the body feverish and untoward; and then, when the man is discompos'd, no wonder if he begins to be petish and peevish; we have seen it by woful experience. Those from whom we had nothing but sweetness and love; while they fed on the same Dish of Gospel-truth with us, how strangely froward are they grown, since they have taken down some unevangelical and erroneous principles? That we know not well how to carry our selves towards them, they are so captious and quarrellom; yea, at the very hearing of the Word, if they have not yet forgot the way to the Ordinance, what a distasteful behaviour do many of them shew? as if every word went against their stomack, and made them sick. O Sirs, let us not blame the Gospel; it is innocent as to these sad contentions among us. *Paul* tells us where to find a father for this brat of strife; see at whose door he directs us to lay it, *Rom. 16. 17. Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine ye have learned.* Where I pray observe how he clears the Gospel; this dividing quarrelling spirit is contrary to the Gospel; they never learnt it in Christs School; and then *implicitly* implies, they have it somewhere else, from some false teacher, and false doctrine or other. *Mark them*, saith he, as if he had said, observe them well, and you shall find them tainted some way or other; they have been warming themselves at Satans fire, and from thence have brought a Coal with them that does the mischief.

22

Secondly, Christians are in part unevangelical in their hearts and lives. The whole root of sin is not stubb'd up at once, no wonder some bitter taste remains in the fruit they bear. Saints in Heaven shall be all grace, and no sin in them; and then they shall be all love also; but here they are part grace, part corruption, and so their love is not perfect; how can they be fully sodred together in unity never to fall out, as long as they are not so fully

recon-

reconciled to God (in point of sanctification) but now and then there happens some breaches betwixt them and God himself? And the less progress the Gospel hath made in their hearts to mortifie lust, and strengthen grace, the less peace and love is to be expected among them. The *Apostle* concludes from the contentions among the Christians at *Corinth*, that they were of little growth in grace; such as were not past the child-spoon and meat, 1 *Cor.* 3. 2. *I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able, for ye are yet carnal.* Nay, he conceives this to be so clear evidence, that he appeals to their consciences if it be not so, *ver.* 3. *For whereas there is among you envyings, and strifes, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* But as grace strengthens, and the Gospel prevails on the hearts of Christians, so does love and a spirit of unity increase with it. We say, *older, and wiser*; though children (when young) do scratch and fight, yet when they get up into years, they begin to agree better. *Omne invalidum est natura querulum*; those that are young and weak, are peevish and quarrellous. Age and strength brings wisdom to overcome those petty differences that now cannot be born. In the controversy between *Abraham* and *Lot* his servants, *Abraham* who was the elder and stronger Christian, he was most forward for peace, so as to crave it at the hands of his Nephew, every way his inferiour; *Paul*, who was a Christian higher by the head than others, O how he excell'd in love! he saith of himself, 1 *Tim.* 1. 14. *The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Jesus Christ: where, faith Master Calvin, Fides inculpatai opponitur; dilectio in Christo, servitia, quam exercebat adversus fideles.* Faith is opposed to his former obstinate unbelief, when a *Pharisee*; love in Christ Jesus, to the cruelty he express'd against Christians, when (breathing slaughter) he went on a persecuting errand to *Damascus*. Now he was as full of faith, as then of unbelief; now as fire-hot of love to the Saints, as then of cruelty against them. But that I quote chiefly the place for, is, to see how this pair of graces thrive and grow together; if abundant in faith, then abundant in love.

CHAP. XIII.

An Exhortation to the Saints to maintain peace among themselves, and promote it to their utmost; from three Arguments.

Use 3.

Thirdly, It brings a seasonable Exhortation to all the Saints, that they would nourish peace what they can among themselves; you all profess to have been baptized into the Spirit of the Gospel; but you do not shew it, when you bite and snarle at one another: The Gospel, that makes Wolves and Lambs agree, doth not teach the Lambs to turn Wolves, and devour each the other. Our Saviour told the two Disciples, whose choler was soon up, that they would be fetching fire from Heaven, to go on their revengeful errand; that they little thought from what hearth that wild-fire of their passion came, *Ye know not what spirit ye are of*, Luk. 9. 46. As if he had said, such fiery wrathful speeches do not suit with the meek Master you serve, nor with the Gospel of peace he preacheth to you. And if the Gospel will not allow us to pay our enemies in their own Coin, and give them wrath for wrath; then much less will it suffer Brethren to spit fire at one anothers face. No, when any such embers of contention begin to smoke among Christians, we may know who left the spark; no other but Satan, he is the great kindle-coal of all their contentions. If there be a tempest (not in the Aire) but in the spirits of Christians, and the wind of their passions be high and loud; it is easie to tell who is the Conjuror: 'Tis the Devil, that is practising his black Art upon their lusts, which yer are so much unmortified, as gives him too great an advantage of raising many times sad storms of division and strife amongst them. *Paul* and

and *Barnabas* set out in a calm together; but the Devil sends a storm after them; such a storm as parted them in the midst of their voyage, *Acts. 27. 39.* And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other. There is nothing (next Christ and Heaven) that the Devil gratches Believers, more than their peace and mutual love; if he cannot rend them from Christ, stop them from getting Heaven, yet he takes some pleasure to see them go thither in a storm; like a shattered fleet sever'd one from another, that they may have no assistance from, nor comfort of each others company all the way; though, where he can divide, he hopes to ruine also, well-knowing this to be the most probable means to effect it; one ship is easier taken than a Squadron. A Town, if it can be but set on fire, the enemy may hope to take it with more ease; let it therefore be your great care to keep the Devils spark from your powder. Certainly peace among Christians is no small mercy, that the Devils Arrows lie so thick at its breast. Something I would fain speak to endear this mercy to the people of God. I love to confess a clear and still Aire, but above all in the Church among Believers; and I am made the more sensible what a mercy this would be, by the dismal consequence of these divisions and differences, that have for some years together troubled our Aire; and filled us with such horror and confusion, that we have not been much unlike that Land call'd *Terra del fogo*, the Land of smoke, because of the frequent flashings of lightnings, and abundance of smoke found there; what can I compare error to, better than smoke? and contention to, than fire? a kind of Emblem of Hell it self, where flames and darkness meet together to encrease the horror of the place. But to press the Exhortation a little closer, give me leave to provoke you by three Arguments to peace and unity.

SECT. I.

First, *For Christs sake.* And methinks, when begging for his sake I should have no nay. When you pray to God, and do but use his name in the business, you are sure to speed. And why should not an Exhortation, that wokes you for Christs sake,

move.

move your hearts to duty, as a prayer put up by you in his Name, moves Gods heart to mercy? Indeed, how canst thou in faith use Christs Name as an Argument to unlock Gods heart to thee, which hath not so much credit with thy self, as to open thy own heart into a compliance with a duty which is so strongly set on his heart to promote among his people? as appears,

1.

First, By the solemn charge he gave his Disciples in this particular, *John 13. 34. A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* I pray observe, how he prepares their hearts to open readily, and bid this Commandment kindly welcome; he sets his own Name upon it. *A new commandment I give unto you.* As if he had said, let this command, though as old as any other, *Lev. 19. 18.* yet go under my Name in an especial manner; when I am gone; and the fire of strife begins at any time among you, remember what particular charge I now give you, and let it quench it presently. Again, observe how he delivers this precept, and that is by way of gift and privilege, *A new Commandment I give unto you.* Indeed this was Christs farewell Sermon, the very streakings of that milk which he had fed them withall; never drop't a sweeter discourse from his blessed lips; he saved his best wine till the last. He was now making his will, and amongst other things that he bequeaths his Disciples, he takes this Commandment, as a Father would do his Seal-ring off his finger, and gives it to them. Again, Thirdly, he doth not barely lay the command before them, but to make it the more effectual, he annexeth in a few words the most powerful Argument why they should, as also the most clear and full direction how they might do this, that is possible to be given; *As I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* O Christians! what may not the love of Christ command you? if it were to lay down your lives for him that loved you to death, would you deny them? and shall not this his love perswade you to lay down your strifes and divisions? this speaks enough, how much weight he laid upon this Commandment; but then again observe, how Christ in the same Sermon, over and over again minds them of this; which if he had not been very sollicitous of, should not have had so large a room in his thoughts then, when he had so little time left, in which he was to croud and sum up all the heavenly counsel and comfort,

fort that he desired to leave with them before his departure ; nay, so great weight he lays on this, that he seems to lock up his own joy, and theirs together in the care that they should take about this one command of loving one another, *Joh. 15. 11. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you ; and that your joy might be full.* What these things were, appears by the precedent verse, *If ye keep my Commandment, ye shall abide in my love.* These were the things that he spake of in order to his joy in them, and theirs in him, that they would keep his Commandments. Now, to let them know, how high a place their obedience to this particular command of love and unity had in his heart, and how eminently it conduced to the continuing his joy in them, and filling up their own ; he chooseth that above any for his instance, in order to what he had said, as you may see verse 12. *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another.* Observe still, how Christ appropriates this Commandment to himself. *This is my Commandment,* as if he would signifie to them, that as he had one disciple, who went by the name of the disciple whom Jesus loved ; so he would have a darling commandment, in which he takes some singular delight, and that this should be it, *their loving one another.* But we are not yet at the last link of this golden chain of Christs discourse. When he hath put some more warmth into their affections to this duty, by exposing his own love to them in the deepest expression of it, even to dye for them, verse 13. then he comes on more boldly, and tells them he will own them for his friends, as they are careful to observe what he had left in charge with them, ver. 14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* And now taking it for granted, that he had prevailed upon them, and they would walk in unity and love as he had commanded them, he cannot conceal the pleasure he takes therein, yea, and in them for it, ver. 15. he opens his heart to them, and locks no secret from them, yea, bids them go and open their heart to God and be free to him, as he is to them, verse 16. And mark from what blessed hour all this familiarity that they are admitted to, bears date. *From henceforth I call not you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth.* That is from the time that you walk dutifully to me, and lovingly to one another. One would

think now he had said enough ; but he thinks not so. In the very next words he is at it again, *verse 17. These things I command you, that ye love one another* ; as if all he had left else in charge with them, had been subservient to this.

A second thing, that speaks Christs heart deeply engaged in the promoting of love and unity among Christians, is his fervent prayer for this. Should you hear a Preacher with abundance of vehemency presse a grace or duty upon the people in his Pulpit, and as soon as Sermon is done, you should go under his cloister window, and hear him as earnestly wrestling with God, that he would give his people what he had so zealously prest upon them ; you would easily believe the man was in earnest. Our blessed Saviour hath taught us Ministers whither to go, when we come out of the Pulpit, and what to do ; No sooner hath he done his Sermon to them, but he is at prayer with God for them. And what he insisted on most in preaching, he enlargeth most upon in prayer ; unity & peace was the legacy he desired so much to leave with them, and this is the boon he puts in strongly with God to bestow on them, *Joh. 17. 21. Father, keep through thine own power, those that thou hast given me ; And why all this care ? that they may be one as we are.* As if he had said, Father, did we ever fall out ? was there ever discord betwixt us ? why then should they who are thine and mine disagree ? so *verse 21.* and again *verse 23.* He is pleading hard for the same mercy. And why so oft ? is it so hardly wrung from God, that Christ himself must tugg so often for it ? No sure, but as Christ said of the voice that came from heaven, *Joh. 12. 30. This voice came not for me, but for your sakes.* So may I say here, This ingeminated zeal of Christ for his peoples unity and love, it was for their sakes.

First, he would by this raise the price of this mercy in their thoughts ; that sure is worth their care, which he counted worth his redoubled prayer, (when not a word was spoke for his own life) or else he misplaced his zeal, and improved not his time with God, for the best advantage of his people.

Secondly, he would make divisions appear more fearful and dreadful things to his people, by putting in so many requests to God for preventing them. Certainly if Christ had known one evil worse than another like to come upon his people at his departure, he would have been so true and kind to his children,

as to deprecate that above all, and keep that off. He told his children what they must look for at the worlds hand, all manner of sufferings and torments that their wit could help their malice to devise; yet Christ prays not so much for immunity from these, as from unbrotherly contentions among themselves; he makes account, if they can agree together, and be in love, Saint with Saint, Church with Church, they have a mercy that will alleviate the other and make it tolerable, yea, joyous; This heavenly fire of love among themselves, will quench the flames of their persecutors, at least the horror of them.

In a word, Christ would, as strengthen our faith to ask boldly for that which he hath bespoken for us, so also aggravate the sin of contention to such a height, that all who have any love to Christ, when they shall see that they cannot live in strife, but they must sin against those prayers which Christ with strong cries put up for peace and unity, they may tremble at the thoughts of it.

Thirdly, the price that Christ gave for the obtaining of this peace and unity. As Christ went from preaching up peace to pulling down peace from heaven by prayer, so he went from praying to paying for it. Indeed Christs prayers, are not a beggars prayers as ours are; he prays his Father that he may only have what he prays for. He was now on the way to the place of payment, *Calvary*, where his blood was the coyn he laid down for this peace. I confess peace with God was the chief pearl, that this wise Merchant, Christ, bought up for his people. But he had this in his eye also; and therefore the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, which is the commemoration feast of Christs death, as it seals our peace with God, so it signifies our love one with another, *1 Cor. 10.* And need I now give you any account why our dear Lord pursued this design so close, of knitting his people in peace and unity together? Truly the Church is intended by Christ to be his house, in which he means to take up his rest, and what rest could he take in a house all on fire about him? It is his Kingdome, and how can his Laws be obeyed, if all his subjects be in a hubbub one against another? *inter arma silent leges.* In a word, his Church are a people that are called out of the world to be a praise to him in the sight of the Nations; as Peter saith, *God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his Name, Acts 5. 14.* that is, a people for his honour; but a wrangling,

divided people would be little credit to the name of Christ ; yea, such, where they are found (and where alas are they not to be found ?) : they are to the name of Christ as smoke, and dirt to a fair face, they crock and disfigure Christ ; so that the world will not acknowledge him to be, who he saith he is ; they lead them even into temptation to think basely of Christ and his Gospel, *Joh. 17. 23.* Christ prays his people may be made perfect in one, and mark his argument, *that the world may know that thou hast sent me ; whose heart bleeds not to hear Christ blasphemed at this day by so many black-mouths ? and what hath open'd them more than the Saints divisions.*

SECT. II.

2. The second Argument shall be taken from your selves ; for your own sakes live in peace and unity. Consider your obligations to love and unity, your relations call for it. If believers, *Paul* tells you your kindred, *Gal. 3. 27. Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* Not only children of God, so are all by Creation, but by faith in Jesus Christ also. Christ he is the Foundation of a new Brother-hood to believers. O Christians consider how near you are set one to another ; you were conceived in the same womb of the Church, begot by the same seed of the Word to this new Creation ; whereby, as one saith, you become brethren of the whole blood ; and therefore, there should be the more unity and dear affection among you than any other. *Josephs* heart went out more to *Benjamin*, than any of the rest of his brethren, because he was his brother, both by father and mother ; if you fall out, who shall agree ? what is it that can rationally break your peace ? Those things which use to be bones of contention, and occasion squabbling among other brethren, Christ hath taken care to remove them all ; so that of all others, your quarrelings are most childish, yea sinful ; sometimes one child finds himself grieved at the partiality of his parents affection, more set on some others than himself ; and this makes him envy them, and they despise him. But there is no such fondling in Gods family, all are dear alike to Christ, *Ephes. 5. 2. Walk*

in love, as Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us; that is, for one as well as another. Christ in the Church is like to the soul in the body; he is *totus in toto, & totus in qualibet parte*. Every member in Christ hath whole Christ, his whole heart and love, as if there were none besides himself to enjoy it.

Again, among men though the father shews not so much partiality in his affection, yet oft great inequality in the distribution of his estate; though all are children, yet not all heirs, and this sows the seed of strife among them. As Jacob found by woful experience. But Christ hath made his Will so, that they are all provided for alike, called therefore the *common salvation*, Jude 3. And the inheritance of the Saints in light, 1 Col. 12. for the community. All may enjoy their happiness without justling with, or prejudicing of one another, as millions of people who look on the same Sun, and at the same time, and none stand in another's light; methinks that speech of Christ looks a little this way, John 17. 22. *The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them that they may be one.* By glory there I would understand heavens glory principally; Now saith Christ, *I have given it*, that is, in reversion, I have given it them; not this or that favourite, but them, I have laid it out as the portion of all sincere believers; and why? *that they may be one*; that all squabbles may be silenced, and none may envy another for what he hath above him, when he sees glory is his. 'Tis true indeed, some difference there is in Christians outward garb; some poor, some rich, and in common-gifts also, some have more of them, some less. But are these *causes*? of such weight to commence a war upon, among those that wait for the same heaven? If the father clads all his children in the same cloth, it were sad to see them stab one another, because one hath a lace more than the other; nay, because one his lace is red, and the others is green; for indeed the quarrel among Christians is sometimes, not for having less gifts than another, but because not the same in kind, though another as good and useful, which possibly he wants whom we envy.

Secondly, consider where you are, and among whom; are you not in your enemies quarters? if you fall out, what do you but kindle a fire for them to warm their hands by? Aha, so would we have it, say they. The sea of their rage will weaken this bank.

first.

fast enough, you need not cut it for them; The unreasonable effe of the strife, betwixt *Abrahams Herd-men*, and *Lots* is aggravated by the near neighbourhood of the Heathens to them, *Gen. 13. 7. And there was a strife between Abrahams Herd-men, and the Herd-men of Lots castel. And the Canaanite, and Perizzite dwelled in the Land.* To fall out while these idolaters lookt on, this would be town-talk presently, and put themselves and their religion both to shame. And I pray, who have been in our Land, all the while the people of God have been scuffling? Those that have curiously observ'd every uncomely behaviour among them, and told all the world of it; Such as have wit and malice enough to make use of it for their wicked purposes. They stand on tip-toes to be at work, only we are not yet quite laid up and disabled (by the soreness of those our wounds, which we have given our selves) from withstanding their fury. They hope it will come to that; and then they will cure us of our own wounds, by giving one if they can, that shall go deep enough to the heart of our life, Gospel and all. O Christians, shall *Herod* and *Pilate* put you to shame? They clapt up a peace to strengthen their hands against Christ; and will not you unite against your common enemy? It is an ill time for Mariners to be fighting, when an enemy is boring a hole at the bottom of their ship.

3. Thirdly, consider the sad consequences of your contentions.

1. First, you put a stop to the growth of grace. The body may as well thrive in a fever, as the soul prosper, when on a flame with strife and contention. No, first this fire in the bones must be quenched, and brought into its natural temper; and so must this unkindly heat be slaked among Christians, before either can grow. I pray observe that place, *Ephes. 4. 15. But speaking the truth in love (or being sincere in love) may grow up in him in all things.* The *Apostle* is upon a cure, shewing how souls that at present are weak, and their grace rather wan and wither, than growing, may come to thrive and flourish; and the receipt he gives, is a composition of these two rare drugs, *sincerity* and *love*; preserve these, and all will do well, as *v. 16.* where the whole body is said to edifie it self in love. There may be preaching, but no edifying without love. Our times are a sad comment upon this Text.

Secondly,

Secondly, you cut off your trade with heaven at the throne of grace; you will be little in prayer to God I warrant you, if much in squabbling with your brethren. It is impossible to go from wrangling to praying with a free spirit. And if you should be so bold as to knock at Gods door, you are sure to have cold welcome, *Mat. 5. 24. Leave thy gift before the Altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* God will not have the incense of prayer put to such strange fire; nor will he eat of our leaven'd bread, taste of any performance sower'd with malice and bitterness of spirit. First, the peace was renewed, and a Covenant of love and friendship struck between *Laban and Jacob*, *Gen. 31. 44. and then ver. 54. Jacob offered sacrifice upon the Mount, and called his brethren to eat bread.* The very *Heathens* thought no serious business could be well done by quarreling spirits. Therefore the *Senators of Rome* used to visit the Temple dedicated *Jovi depositorio*, because there they did *deponere inimicitias*, lay down all their feuds and controversies, before they went into the Senate to consult of State affairs; durst not they go to the Senate till friends? and dare we go up to Gods Altar, bow our knees to him in prayer, while our hearts are royled and swollen with anger, envy and malice? O God humble us.

Thirdly, as we cut off our trade with heaven, so with one another; when two Countreys fall out, whose great interest lies in their mutual traffique, they must needs both pinch by the War. Truly, the Christians great gains come in by their mutual commerce; and they are the richest Christians commonly, who are seated with greatest advantage for this trade. As no Nation hath all their commodities of their own growth, but needs some Merchandize with others; so there is no Christian that could well live without borrowing from his brethren. There is that which every joynt supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, *Eph. 4. 16.* Paul himself is not so well laid in, but he hopes to get something more than he hath from the meanest of those he preached to; he tells the Christians at *Rome*, chap. 1. he longs to see them, as to impart some spiritual gift to them, *v. 11.* so saith he, *that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me*, verse 12.

yes,

yea, he hopes to be filled with their company, Rom. 15. 24. As a man is filled with good chear, he hopes to make a feast of their company. Now contentions and divisions spoil all entercourse among believers. They are as baneful to Christian communion, as a great pestilence or plague is to the trade of a Market Town. Communication flows from communion, and communion that is founded upon union. The Church grows under persecution; that sheds the seed all over the field, and brings the Gospel where else it had not been heard of. But divisions and contentions, like a furious storm, washes the seed out of the land with its heart, farnesse, and all.

Fourthly, you do not only hazard the decay of grace, but growth of sin. Indeed it shews there is more than a little corruption got within doors already, but it opens the door to much more, *James 3. If ye have bitter envying, and strife, glory not;* that is, do not think you are such good Christians. This stains all your other excellencies, had ye the knowledge and gifts of holy Angels, yet this would make you look more like Devils than them; he gives the reason, *verse 16. for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.* Contention is the Devils forge, in which if he can but give a Christian a heat or two, he will no doubt but to soften him for his hammer of temptation. *Moses* himself, when his spirit was a little hot, *spake unadvisedly with his lips.* It must needs be an occasion of much sinning, which renders it impossible for a man while in his distemper to do any one righteous action. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God,* *James 1. 20.* Now what a sad thing is it for Christians to stay long in that temper in which they can do no good to one another, but provoke lust?

Fifthly, they are prognosticks of judgement coming. A louring sky speaks foul weather at hand. And Mariners look for a storm at sea, when the waves begins to swell, and utter a murmuring noise. Hath there been nothing like these among us? what can we think, but a judgement is breeding by the louring countenances of Christians, their swellings of heart, and discontented passions vented from their swoln spirits, like the murmuring of waters, or rumbling of thunder in the air before a tempest? When children fight and wrangle, now is the time they may

may expect their father to come, and part them with his Rod, *Mal. 4. 6.* *He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I smite the earth with a curse;* Strife and contention set a people next door to a curse. God makes account he brings a heavy judgment upon a people, when himself leaves them. If the Master leaves the ship, it is near sinking indeed. And truly no readier way to send him going, than by contentions. These smother him out of his own house. *Be of one mind* (saith the Apostle) *live in peace, and the God of peace shall be with you,* 2 Cor. 13. 11. Implying, if they did not live in peace, they must not look to have his company long with them. God was coming in *Moses* with a great salvation to the *Israelites*, and as a handiell of the good services, he was to do for them, he begins to make peace between two discontented Brethren as they strove; but his kindness was not accepted, and this was the occasion of many years misery more that they endured in *Egypt*. Then fled *Moses* at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of *Madian*, Acts 7. 29. And no news of deliverance for the space of forty years after, ver. 30. And have not our dissensions, or rather our rejecting those overtures, which God by men of healing spirits hath offered for peace, been the cause why mercy hath fled so fast from us, and we left to groan under those sad miseries that are upon us at this day? and who knows how long? O who can think what a glorious morning shone upon *England* in that famous *Parliament* begun 1640. and not weep and weep again to see our hopes for a glorious Reformation, that opened with them, now shut up in blood and War, contention and confusion? miseries too like the fire and brimstone that fell from Heaven upon those unhappy Cities of the Plain.

SECT. III.

Thirdly and lastly, O labour for peace and unity for others sake. I mean those, who at present are wicked and ungodly, among whom ye live; we are not, saith *Austin*, to despair of the wicked, but do our utmost they may be made good and godly.

(K k k)

Quia

Quia numerus sanctorum, semper de numero impiorum auctus est.
 Because God ever calls his number out of the heap and multitude of the ungodly World. Now, no more winning means to work upon them, and pave a way for their conversion, than to commend the truths and wayes of God to them, by the amiableness of your love and unity that profess the same. This is the cummin-seed that would draw souls like Doves to the windows. This is the gold to overlay the Temple of God (the Church) so as to make all in love with its beauty, that look into it. Every one is afraid to dwell in a House haunted with evil spirits. And hath Hell a worse than the spirit of division? O Christians agree together, and your number will increase. It is said, *Acts 2.46.* They continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. And mark what follows, *v. 47.* They had favour with all the people, and the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved. The World was so great a stranger to love and peace, that it was amused, and set of considering, what heavenly doctrine that was, which could so mollifie mens hearts, plain their rugged natures, and jo'n them so close in love together, and were the more easily perswaded to adopt themselves into that true family of love. But alas, when this gold became dim (I mean peace among Christians faded) then the Gospel lost credit in the World, and the doctrine of it came under more suspicion in their thoughts, who seeing such clefts gape in her walls, were more afraid to put their heads under its roof. *Can. 2. 4.* I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the Rees, and the Hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor wake my love till he please. Master Cotton on the place, by the Rees and Hinds of the field (which are fearful creatures, easily scared away, yet otherwise willing to feed with the sheep) takes the Gentiles to be meant, inclinable to embrace the Jewish Religion, but very soon scared away by the troublesome state of it, or any offensive carriage of the Jews. And what more offensive carriage than divisions and strifes? see them joined together, *Rom. 16. 7.* Mark them which cause divisions and offences. If divisions, then there are sure to be offences taken, and many possibly hardened in their sins thereby. Do not your hearts tremble to lay the stumbling block for any to break his neck over to roll the stone over any poor sinners grave, and

and seal him down in it, that he never have a resurrection to grace here, or glory hereafter. As you would keep your selves free of the blood of those that dye in their sins, take heed of lending any thing by your divisions to the hardning of their souls in their impenitency.

SECT. IV.

The fourth and last sort of peace which I thought to have spoken of, is a peace with all the creatures, even the most fierce and cruel. I called it a peace of indemnity and service. This *Adam* in his primitive state enjoyed; while he was innocent, all the creatures were innocent and harmless to him; the whole Creation was at his service, no malicious principle was found in any creature that did incline it in the least to rebel against him. When God sent the beasts of the field, and fowles of the aire to receive names from him, it was that they should do their homage to him, and acknowledge him as their Lord; and that he, by exercising that act of authority over them (in giving them names) might have an experiment of his perfect (though not absolute and independent) dominion over them. But no sooner did man withdraw his Allegiance from God, but all the creatures (as if they had been sensible of the wrong, man by his Apostasy had done his and their Maker (by whose Parent he held his Lordship over them) they presently forget their subjection to him, yea, take up Arms in their supreme Lords quarrel against Apostate man. And thus they continue in array against him, till God and man meet together again in a happy Covenant of peace; and then the Commission which God in wrath gave them against rebel-man is called in; and in the same day that God and the believing soul are made friends, the War ends between him and them. *Hosea 2. 18. In that day will I make a Covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowles of the heaven; and mark the day from whence this Covenant bears date. In that day, that is, in the day that I betroth thee unto me; so that our peace with the creatures, comes in by our peace with God. And this being the blessing of the Gospel, so must that also.* But as

our peace with God is not so perfectly enjoyed in this life, but God hath left himself a liberty to chastise his reconciled ones, and that sharply too; so our peace with the creatures doth not hinder, but that they may be (yea often are) the Rod which God useth to correct them with. The water may drown one Saint, and the fire consume another to ashes, and yet these creatures at peace with these Saints, because they are not sent by God in wrath against them, for any real hurt that God means them thereby. This indeed was the Commission that he gave all the creatures against Apostate man as part of his curse for his sin. He sent the creatures against him (as a Prince doth his General against a company of Traytors in Arms against him) with Authority to take vengeance on them for their horrid Rebellion against their Maker. But now the Commission is alter'd, and runs in a more comfortable strain. Go fire, and be the Chariot in which such a Saint may be brought home from Earth to me in Heavens glory. Go water, waite another; and so of all the rest. Not a creature comes on a worse message to a Saint; 'tis true, they are sharp corrections as to the present smart they bring; but they are ever mercies, and do a friendly office in the intention of God, and happy issue to the Believer. *All things work together for good to them that love God*, Rom. 8. 28. And the *Apostle* speaks it as a common principle well known among the Saints, *We know that all things work, &c.* As if he had said, Where is the Saint that doth not know this? And yet it were happy for us if we knew it better; some of us would then pass our dayes more comfortably than now we do. But I intend not a Discourse of this; let brevity here make amends for proximity in the former.



CHAP. XIV.

*The Duty of a Christian to stand shod with a heart
prepared for all Sufferings, with one Reason
of the point.*

WE come to the third Enquiry or Question from these words propounded.

SECT. I.

Quest. What is meant by *this preparation of the Gospel of peace*, with which the Christians feet are to be shod? or thus, What grace doth this preparation, with which we are to be shod, signifie? And why call'd the preparation of the Gospel of peace?

Quest.

Ans. As for the grace held forth by this *Preparation of the Gospel, &c.* I find great variety in the apprehensions of the learned, and indeed variety, rather than contrariety. I shall therefore spare the mentioning them (many of which you may find in a bunch collected by the Reverend Doctor *Gonge* upon the place with his thoughts upon them) and crave the boldness to lay down (with due respect to others) the apprehensions I have had thereon; which I conceive, will rather amplify, than thwart their sense. Now what this *ἑτοιμασία*, or preparation is, will best appear by considering the part it is design'd for; and that is *the foot*, the only member in the body to be shod, and the piece of *Armor* it is compared to, and that is the *Soldiers*

Ans.

shoes,

shoe, which (if right) is to be of the strongest make, being not so much intended for finery as defence; and that so necessary, that for want of it alone, the Souldier in some cases is disabled for service; as when he is called to march far on hard ways, and those (may be) strowed with sharp stones; how long will he go (if not shod) without wounding or foundring? or if the way be good, but the weather bad, and his feet not fenced from the wet and cold, they are not so far from the head, but the cold got in them, may strike up to that; yea, bring a disease on the whole body, which will keep him on his bed, when he should be in the field: As many almost are surfeited, as slain in Armies. Now what the foot is to the body, that the will is to the soul. The foot carries the whole body, and the will the soul; yea, the whole man, body and soul also. *Voluntas est locomotiva facultas*; we go whither our will sends us. And what the shoe is to the foot, that preparation, or if you please a readiness and alacrity is to the will. The man whose feet are well shod, fears no ways, but goes through thick and thin; foul or fair, stones or straws, all are alike to him that is well shod; while the bare-footed man, or slenderly shooed, shrinks when he feels the wet, and shrieks when he lights on a sharp stone. Thus when the will and heart of a man is prompt, and ready to do any work, the man is as it were shod and arm'd against all trouble and difficulty, which he is to go over in the doing of it. They say, the *Irish* tread so light on the ground, that they will run over some boggs, wherein any other almost would stick or sink. A prepared ready heart I am sure will do this in a spiritual sense; none can walk, where he can run; he makes nothing of afflictions, yea, persecutions, but goes singing over them; David never so merry as in the Cave, *Psal.* 57. and how came he so? *My heart is prepared, my heart is prepared (saith he) I will sing and give praise.* If David's heart had not been shod with this preparation, he would not have liked his way so well he was in; you would have had him sing to another tune, and heard him quarrel with his destiny, or fall out with his profession, that had put him to so much trouble; and driven him from the pleasures of a Prince's Court, to hide himself under ground in a Cave from those that hunted for his precious life. He would have spent his breath rather in pining and bemoaning himself, than in praising

of God; an unprepared heart that is not well satisfied with its work or condition, hangs back; and though it may be brought to submit to it with meekness, yet it is but as a foundred Horse on a stony way, who goes in pain every step, and would oft be turning out of the path, if bit and whip did not keep him in.

Quest. 2. But why is it called the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace?

Quest. 2.

Ans. Because the Gospel of peace is the great instrument by which God works the will and heart of man into this readiness and preparation to do or suffer what he calls to. 'Tis the business we are set about, when preaching the Gospel, to make a willing people, Psal. 110. *To make ready a people prepared for the Lord,* Luk. 1. As a Captain is sent to beat up his Drum in a City, to call in a company that will voluntarily list themselves to follow the Princes Wars, and be in a readiness to take the field, and march at an hours warning: Thus, the Gospel comes to call over the hearts of men to the foot of God, to stand ready for his service whatever it costs them; now this it doth as it is a Gospel of Peace. It brings the joyful tidings of peace concluded betwixt God and man by the blood of Jesus; and this is to welcome to the trembling conscience of poor sinners, who before melted away their sorrowful dayes in a fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation from the Lord to devour them as his Adversaries; that no sooner the report of a peace concluded betwixt God and them sounds in their ears by the preaching of the Gospel, and is certainly confirm'd to be true in their own consciences by the Spirit, who is sent from Heaven to seal it to them, and give them some sweet gust of it, by shedding abroad the sense of it in their souls; but instantly there appears a new life in them; that they who before were so fearful and shy of every petty trouble, as to start and boggle at the thought of it (knowing it could bring no good news to them) are now (tho' with the preparation of the Gospel of peace) able to go out smilingly to meet the greatest sufferings that are, or can be on the way towards them, and say undauntedly to them (as once Christ did to those that came with swords and staves to catch him) *Whom seek ye?* being justified by faith, we have peace with God (saith the Apostle) Rom. 5. 1. And this, how mightily doth it work?

Ans.

even

even to make them glory in tribulations. The words opened, afford these two points.

1. *Dost. 1.* It is our duty to be alwayes prepared, and ready to meet with any trial, and endure any hardship which God may lay out for us in our Christian warfare.
2. *Dost. 2.* The peace which the Gospel brings and speaks to the heart, will make the creature ready to wade thorough any tryal or trouble that meets him in his Christian course.

SECT. II.

1. *Dost. 1.* We ought to maintain a holy readiness of spirit to endure any hardship which God may lay out for us in our Christian course; Saints are sure to want no tryals and sufferings: These (as Christ saith of the poor) *we shall have alwayes with us.* The bloody sweat which Christ felt, signified (saith *Augustine*) the sufferings which in his whole mystical body he should endure. Christs whole body was lift upon the Cross, and no member must now look to escape the Cross; And when the Cross comes, how must we behave our selves towards it? It will not speak us Christians, that we are meerly passive, and make no notorious resistance against the Will of God; but we must be active in our patience (if I may so speak) by shewing a holy readiness and alacrity of spirit to be at Gods ordering, though it were to be led down into the very Chambers of death it self. That *Epitaph* would not become a Christians grave-stone, which I have heard was engraved upon ones Tomb, and might too truly on most that dye, *Here lies one against his will.* Holy *Paal* was of a better mind, *Acts 21. 13. I am ready not only to be bound, but also to dye at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus.* But may be this was but a flourish of his colours when he knew the enemy to be far enough off; he may yet live to change his thoughts, when he comes to look death in the face. No, what he hath said, he stands to, *2 Tim. 4. 6. I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand,* ~~over his soul~~, he speaks of it, as if it were already done; indeed he had already laid his head on the Block, and

and was dead before the stroke was given, not with fear (as some have been) but with a free resignation of himself to it; and if a *martyr* be *civiliter mortuus*, dead in a Law sense, as soon as the sentence is out of the Judges mouth, though he lives some weeks after; then I am sure in a Gospel sense we may say, those are dead already, that are ready to dye, that have freely put themselves under the sentence of it in their own willingness. And this alacrity and serenity that was on *Paul's* spirit, was the more remarkable, if we consider how close he stood to his end. Indeed some from the word, *σπένδουσι* (which properly signifieth a libation or drink-offering) conceive that *Paul* knew the very kind of death which he should suffer, namely Beheading; and that he alludes to the pouring out of blood or wine, used in sacrifice, as that kind of sacrifice, which did best illustrate the nature of his death, *viz.* the pouring out his blood; which he did as willingly offer up in the service of Christ and his Church, as they did pour out their wine in a drink-offering to the Lord. We shall now give some rational account of the point, why we are to be ready and prompt at suffering-work. The Reasons of the point shall fall under two heads. First, taken from Christ, for or from whom we suffer. The second, from the excellency of such a temper, as this readinesse to endure any hardship imports.

First, in regard of Christ. 1. He commands it. 2. He deserves it.

SECT. III.

First, he commands it. Indeed this frame of spirit is implied in every duty, as the *modus agendi*, that qualification, which (like the stamp on coyn) makes it currant in Gods account, *Tit. 3. 1.* Put them in mind (saith the Apostle) to be ready to every good work. be it active or passive, they must be ready for it, or else all they do is to no purpose. The word there is the same with this in the Text, and is taken from a vessel that is fashioned and fitted for the use the master puts it to, we do not like, when we are to use a vessel (cup or pot) to have them out of the way, or to mend,

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and

and scout at that time we call for them, but look to find them at hand on the shelf, clean and fit for present use, or our servants shall hear of it. Thus God expects we should keep our hearts clean from the defilements of sin, & our affections whole and entire for himself; that they be not lent out to the creature, nor broken and battered by any inordinacy of delight in them, lest we should be to seek when he calls us to do or suffer; or be found very unprepared, without much ado to set us to right, and make us willing for the work, as the same Apostle, 2 Tim. 2. 21. *If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Masters use, and prepared unto every good work.* Now, as God commands this readiness in all, so especially in suffering-work, Luk. 9. 23. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.* These words may be called the Christians Indenture; Every one that will be Christs servant, must seal to this, before he hath leave from Christ to call him Master; wherein you see the chief provision Christ makes, is about suffering work, as that which will most try the man. If the servant can but fadge with that, no fear but hee'l like the other part of his work well enough. Now I pray observe, how careful Christ is to engage the heart in this work; he will have his servants not only endure the hardship of his service, but shew their readiness in it also; four remarkable passages are put in for this purpose.

First, he must deny himself, that is, deliver up his own will out of his own hands, and from that day that he enters into Christs service, acknowledge himself not to be *sui juris*, at his own dispose; whatever Christ bears, he cannot, to hear his servants (when sent by him on any business) say, *I will not.*

Secondly, He tells them the worst at first, and chooseth to speak of the cross they must bear, rather than the Crown they shall at last wear; and withal, that he expects they should not only bear it (this the wicked do full sore against their wills) but also *take it up.* Indeed he doth not bid them make the cross, run themselves into trouble of their own head, but hee'l have them take that up which he makes for them; that is, not step out of the way by any sinful shift to escape any trouble, but to accept of the burthen God lays for them, and go chearfully under it, yea, thankfully, as if God did us a favour to employ us in any suffering for him; we do not take so much pains as to stoop to take up that which is not worth something;

something; Christ will have his people take up the crosse, as one does to take up a pearl that lies on the ground before him.

Thirdly, this they must do every day, and take up his crosse daily; when there is none on his back, he must carry one in his heart, that is, continually be preparing himself to stand ready for the first call; as Porters stand at the Merchants doors in London, waiting when their Masters have any burthen for them to carry. Thus Paul professeth he died daily; how, but by a readiness of mind to die? He set himself in a posture to bid Gods messenger welcome, when ever it came. This indeed is to take up the crosse daily; when our present enjoyments do not make us strange to, or fall out with the thoughts of future trials. The Jews were to eat the Pascheover with their loyns girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staves in their hand, and all in haste, *Exod. 12. 11.* When God is feasting the Christian with present comforts, he must have this Gospel-shoe on, he must not set to it as if he were feasting at home, but as at a running meal on his way in an *Inne*, willing to be gone, as soon as he is refresh't a little for his journey.

Fourthly, when the crosse is on, what then? then he must follow Christ; not stand still and fret, but follow; not be drawn and haul'd after Christ, but follow, as a souldier his Captain, voluntarily; Christ doth not as some Generals, drive the Country before him, and make his servants fight whether they will or no, but he invites them in, *Hosea 2. 14. I will allure her into the wilderness.* Indeed a gracious heart follows Christ into the wilderness of affliction, as willingly as a lover his beloved into some solitary private Arbor or Bower there to sit and enjoy his presence. Christ useth arguments in his Word, and by his Spirit so satisfactory to the Christian, that he is very willing to follow him; as the Patient, who at first, may be, shrinks and draws back, when the Physician talks of cutting or bleeding, but when he hath heard the reasons given by him why that course must be taken, and is convinc'd 'tis the best way for his health, then he very freely puts forth his arm to the knife, and thanks the Physician for his pains.

SECT. IV.

2. Secondly, Christ deserves this frame of spirit at our hands; Of many, take but two particulars, wherein this will appear. First, if we consider his readinesse to endure trouble and sorrow for us. Secondly, his tender care over us, while we endure either for, or from him.

1. His readinesse to endure sorrow and trouble for us; when God called him to the work of Mediatorship, he found the way laid with sharper stones (I hope) than we do in the road that is appointed us to walk in. He was to tread upon swords and pikes, all manner of sorrows, and those edg'd with the wrath of God; this was the sharpest stone of all (which he hath taken out of our way) and yet how light did he go upon the ground? O had not his feet been well shod with love to our souls, he would soon have turned back, and said the way was unpassable; but on he goes and blunts not; never did we sin more willingly, than he went to suffer for our sin. *Loe, I come,* (saith he to his Father) *I delight to do thy will, O my God, thy Law is within my heart,* Psalm. 40. 7. O what a full consent did the heart of Christ rebound to his Fathers call? like some echo that answers what is spoken twice or thrice over. Thus, when his Father speaks to him to undertake the work of saving poor lost Man, he doth not give a bare assent to the call, but trebbles it; *I come, I delight to do thy will, yea, thy Law is in my heart.* He was so ready, that before his enemies laid hands on him, he (as it were) laid hands on himself, in the instituting of the Lords Supper, and there did Sacramentally rend the flesh of his own body, and broach his own heart to fill that cup with his precious blood, which with his own hand he gave them, that they might not look upon his death now at hand as a meer butchery from the hand of mans violence, but rather as a sacrifice, wherein he did freely offer up himself to God for them and all believers. And when the time was come that the sad tragedy should be acted, he knowing the very place whither the traytour with his black guard would come, goes out, and marcheth into the very mouth of them. O what a shame were it, that we should be unwilling to go a mile

or two of rugged way, to bear so sweet a Saviour company in his sufferings? *Could ye not watch with me one hour?* said Christ to Peter, Mat. 26. 40. Not with me, who am now going to meet with death it self, and ready to bid the bitterest pangs of it welcome for your sakes? *not with me?*

Secondly, Christ deserves this readinesse to meet any suffering he lays out in his providence for us, if we consider his tender care over his Saints, when he calls them into a suffering condition. Kind Masters may well expect chearful servants. The more tender the Captain is over his souldiers, the more prodigal they are of their own lives at his command. And it were strange, if Christs care, which deserves more, should meet with lesse ingenuity in a Saint. Now Christs care appears,

First, in proportioning the burthen to the back he lays it on. That which over-loads one ship, and would hazard to sink her, is but just ballace for another of greater burthen. Those sufferings which one Christian cannot bear, another sails trim and even under. The weaker shoulder is sure to have the lighter carriage. As Paul burthen'd some Churches (which he knew more able) to spare others; so Christ to ease the weaker Christian, lays more weight on the stronger. *Paul laboured more abundantly than them all*, he tells us, 1 Cor. 15. 10. But why did Christ so unequally divide the work? observe the place, and you shall find that it was but necessary to employ that abundant grace he had given him. *His grace* (saith he) *which was bestowed on me, was not in vain, but I laboured more, &c.* There was so much grace poured into him, that some of it would have been in vain, if God had not found him more to do and suffer than the rest. Christ hath a perfect rate by him of every Saints spiritual estate, and according to this all are assest, and so none are oppressed. The rich in grace can as easily pay his pound, as the poor his penny. Paul laid down his head on the block for the cause of Christ, as freely as some (and those true, but weak Christians) would have done a few pounds out of their purse. He endured death with lesse trouble, than some could have done reproach for Christ. All have not a Martyrs faith, nor all the Martyrs fire. This forlorn consists of a few files pickt out of the whole army of Saints.

2.

Secondly, the consolations he gives them then (in exceedings) above other of their brethren, that are not call'd out to such hard service. That part of an Army which is upon action in the field, is sure to have their pay (if their Masters have any money in their purse or care of them;) yea, sometimes, when their fellows left in their Quarters are made to stay. I am sure, there is more gold and silver (spiritual joy I mean, and comfort) to be found in Christs camp (among his suffering ones) than their brethren at home in peace and prosperity, ordinarily can shew: What are the promises, but vessels of cordial wine, tunn'd on purpose against a groaning hour, when God usually broacheth them? *Call upon me* (saith God) *in the day of trouble*, Psal. 50. 15. and may we not do so in the day of peace? yes, but he would have us most bold with him in a day of trouble. None find such quick dispatch at the Throne of grace, as suffering Saints. *In the day that I cried* (saith David) *thou answeredst me, and gavest me strength in my soul*, Pl. 158. 3. he was now at a strait, and God comes in haste to him. Though we may make a well friend stay (that sends for us) yet we will give a sick friend leave to call us up at midnight. In such extremities we usually go with the messenger that comes for us; and so doth God with the prayer; Peter knockt at their gate (who were assembled to seek God for him) almost as soon as their prayer knockt at heaven gate in his behalf. And truly it is no more than needs, if we consider the temptations of an afflicted condition; we are prone then to be suspicious our best friends forget us, and to think every stay a delay, and neglect of us; therefore God chooseth to shew himself most kind at such a time, *As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth also by Christ*, 2 Cor. 1. 5. As man laid on trouble, so Christ laid in consolation: Both tydes rose and fell together; when it was Spring-tyde with him in affliction, it was so with him in his joy; we relieve the poor, as their charge encreaseth, so Christ comforts his people, as their troubles multiply; And now (Christian) tell me, doth not thy dear Lord deserve a ready spirit in thee to meet any suffering with, for, or from him, who gives his sweetest comforts, where his people use to expect their saddest sorrows? Well may the servant do his work cheerfully, when his Master is so careful of him, as with his own hands to bring him his breakfast into the fields. The Christian stays not till he come to heaven for all his comfort. There indeed shall be
the

the full supper, but there is a breakfast (Christian) of previous joys more or less,) which Christ brings to thee into the field, and shall be eaten on the place where thou endurest thy hardship.

Thirdly, in the seasonable succours which Christ sends to bring them off safe. He doth not only comfort them in, but helps them out of all their troubles. There is ever a door more than the Christian sees in his prison, by which Christ can with a turn of his hand, open a way for his Saints escape. And what can he desire more? all is well that ends well. And what better security can we desire for this, than the promise of the great God, with whom to lye is impossible? And I hope the credit which God hath in his peoples hearts, is not so low, but a bill under his hand will be accepted at first sight by them, in exchange of what is dearest to them, life it self not excepted. Look to thy self when thou hast to do with others: None so firm, but may crack under thee, if thou layest too much weight on them; one would have thought so worthy a Captain as *Uriah* was, might have trusted his General, yea his Prince (and he so holy a man as *David* was;) but he was unworthily betray'd by them both into the hands of death. Man may, the devil to be sure will, leave all in the lurch that do his work. But if God sets thee on, hee'll bring thee off; never fear, *A look thee to that* from his lips, when thy faithfulness to him hath brought thee into the brisars; he that would work a wonder, rather than let a run-away *Prophet* perish in his sinful voyage (because a good man in the main) will heap miracle upon miracle, rather than thou shalt miscarry and sink in thy duty; only be not troubled, if thou beeest cast overboard (like *Jonah*) before thou seeest the provision which God makes for thy safety; it is ever at hand, but sometimes lies cloie, and out of the creatures sight, like *Jonahs* whale (sent of God to ferry him to shore) under water, and the *Prophet* in its belly, before he knew where he was; that which thou think'st comes to devour thee, may be the messenger that God sends to bring thee safe to Land. Is not thy shoe, Christian, yet on? art thou not yet ready to march? canst fear any stone now can hurt thy foot thorough so thick a sole?



CHAP. XV.

The second reason of the point taken from the excellency of this frame of spirit.

Reason 2.

THe second reason of the point, is taken from the excellency of this frame of spirit; which will appear in divers particulars.

SECT. I.

I.

Numb. 14. 24.

First, this readines of heart to stoop to the crosse, evidenceth a gracious heart; and a gracious spirit (I am sure) is an excellent spirit; flesh and blood never made any willing to suffer either for God or from God; he that can do this, hath that *other spirit* which proves him of a higher descent than this world; A carnal heart can neither act nor suffer freely; *voluntas libera, in quantum liberata*, Luth. The will is no more free, than 'tis made free by grace. So much flesh as is left in a Saint, so much awkness and unwillingness to come to Gods foot; and therefore where there is nothing but flesh, there can be nothing but unwillingness. He that can find his heart following God in his command or providence chearfully, *may know who hath been there* (as one said of the famous *Grecian* Limner) This is a line, that none but God could draw on thy soul. The Midwives said of the *Israelitish* women, they were not like the *Egyptian* in bringing forth their children, *for they were lively, and deliver'd ere the Midwives could*

could come at them, *Exod. 1. 19.* Truly thus lively and ready is the gracious heart in any thing 'tis called to do, or suffer. It is not delivered with so much difficulty of a duty as a carnal heart, which must have the help and midwifery of some carnal arguments, or else it sticks in the birth: but the gracious heart has done before these come to lend their helping hand; pure love to God; obedience to the call of his command, and faith on the security of his promise, facilitate the work; that be it never so burthensoime to the flesh, yet it is not grievous to the spirit. That is ever ready to say, *Thy will be done, and not mine.* The Apostle makes this free submission to the disposeure of Gods afflicting hand to evidence a sonnes spirit, *Heb. 12. 7.* *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sonnes.* Observe, he doth not say, if you be chasten'd, but, if you endure chastening. Naked suffering doth not prove son-ship, but *υποκειμεναι ταις δαυ.* doth; to endure it so as not to sink in our courage, or shrink from under the burthen God layes on, but readily to offer our shoulder to it, and patiently carry it, looking with a chearful eye at the reward, when we come (not to throw it off) but to have it taken off by that hand which laid it on) all which the word imports) this shews a child-like spirit; and the evidence thereof must needs be a comfortable companion to the soul, especially at such a time, when that *Sophister of hell* useth the afflictions which lie upon it, as an argument to disprove its childe relation to God; now to have this answer to stop the liars mouth at hand; Satan, if I be not a child, how could I so readily submit to the Lords family-discipline? This is no small mercy.

SECT. II. Secondly, this frame of spirit makes him a free man, that hath it; and no mean price useth to be set upon the head of liberty. The very birds had rather be abroad in the woods with liberty (though lean with cold and care) to pick up here and there a little livelihood, than in a golden cage with all their attendance. Now truly, there is a bondage which few are sensible of, and that is a bondage to the creature; when a man is so enslaved to his

enjoyments and low contentments here on earth, that they give law to him (that should give law to them) and measure out his joy to him (what he shall have) little or much, as he abounds with, or is cut short of them. Thus some are slaves to their estates, it is said, *their hearts goes after their countenance*; that is, as the servant after the Master, who dares not be from his back. Their money is the Master, and hath the best keeping; their heart waits on it, shall I say as a servant after his Master? yea as a dog at his masters foot; others are as great slaves to their honours, so poor spirited, that they cannot enjoy themselves, if they have not the cap and knee of all they meet, such a slave was *Haman*, the great favourite of his Prince, who but heat Court that could at the expense of a few words, get the Kings ring to seal a bloody decree for the slaughtering of so many thousands of innocent persons against all sense and reason of State, merely to fulfill his lust, had not this man honour enough put upon him to content his ambitious spirit? No, there is a poor Jew at the Kings gate, will not make a leg to him as he goes by, and this so royal as his proud stomach; that he has no joy of all his other greatness, *Eccl. 9. 13. yet all this availeth me nothing* (saith the poor spirited wretch) *so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the Kings gate*. A third sort are as much in bondage to their pleasures, they are said to *love pleasure on earth*, Jam. 5. 5. their life is bound up in their pleasures, as the rush grows in the mead, & the fish lives in the water, they cannot live without their pleasures, take them from their seats and sports, and their hearts with *Nabal* die like a stone in their bosoms. Now this frame of spirit we are speaking of, breaks all these chains, and brings the Christian out of every house of bondage. It learns him to like what fare God sends; if prosperity comes, *he knows how to abound*; so, that if he be by a turn of providence thrown out of the saddle of his present enjoyment, his foot shall not hang in the stirrup, or his enslaved soul drag him after it with whining desires. No, through grace he is a free man, and can spare the company of any creature, so long as he may but have Christs with him. Blessed *Paul* stands upon his liberty, *all things are lawful to me, but I will not be brought under the power of any*, 1 Cor. 6. 12. I know the place is meant of those indifferent things concerning which there was a pretest dispute, there is but another sense, in which all things here below were indifferent things.

to that holy man; honour, or dishonour; abundance, or want; life or death. These were indifferent to *Paul*; he would not come under the power of any one of them all. It did not become a servant of Christ, he thought, to be so tender of his reputation, as to write himself undone, when he had not this or that; nor to be so in love with abundance, as not to be ready to welcome want. Nor to be endeared so to life, as to run from the thoughts of death. Nor to be so weary of a suffering life, as to hasten death to come for his ease. *Major animus dicendus est, qui urum nosam vitam magis elegit ferre, quam fugere.* Aug.

SECT. III.

Thirdly, this readinesse to suffer as it innobles with freedom, so it enables the Christian for service. It is a sure truth, so far and no more is the Christian fit to live serviceably, than he is prepared to suffer readily. Because there is no duty but hath the crosse attending on it, and he that is offended at the crosse, will not be long pleased with the service that it brings. Prayer is the daily exercise of a Saint; this he cannot do as he should, except he can heartily say, *thy will be done*; and who can do that in truth, unless ready to suffer? Praising God is a standing duty; yea, in every thing we must give thanks, 1 Thes. 5. but, what if affliction befalls us, how shall we tune our hearts to that note, if not ready to suffer? can we blesse God and murmur? praise God and repine? The Ministers work is to preach, *woe to him if he do not*, and if he do preach, he is sure to suffer. *Paul* had his orders for the one, and *Mittimus* for the other together; he was sent at the same time to preach the grace of God to the world, and to endure the wrath of the world for God; so God told *Ananias*, that he should bear his Name before the Gentiles, and suffer great things for his Names sake, Acts 9. 15, 16. And if the Gospel did not please the ungrateful world out of *Pauls* mouth, who had such a rare art of sweetening it. It were strange that any who fall so far short of his gifts, to move in the Pulpit, and of his grace to winne upon the hearts of men when out, should (if they meane to be faithful) think to go without the wages, which the

world paid him for his pains, reproach and contempt, if not down right blows or bloody persecution as he met with. And is not this shoe needful for the preachers foot, that is to walk among so many hissing Serpents; who but a *Paul*, that had got over the fond love of life, and feare of a bloody death, would have been so willing to go into the very *Lions* den, and preach the Gospel there, where he invited death in a manner to come unto him? I mean at *Rome* it self, the seat of cruel *Nero*. *So much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also, for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, Rom. 1. 15, 16.*

In a word, 'tis the duty of every Christian to make a free profession of Christ. Now this cannot be done without hazard many times. And if the heart be not resolv'd in this point what to do, the first storme that riseth will make the poor man put in to any creek or hole, rather than venture abroad in foul weather. *John 12. 42. among the chief Rulers also many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confesse him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue.* Poor souls, they could have been content, if the coast had been clear, to have put forth, but had not courage enough to bear a little scorne that threatned them. O what folly is it to engage for God, except we be willing to lay all at stake for him? It is not worth the while to set out in Christs company, by profession, except we mean to go thorough with him, and not leave him unkindly when we are half way, because of a slough or two.

SECT. IV.

This readinesse of spirit to suffer gives the Christian the true enjoyment of his life: A man never comes to enjoy himself truly in any comfort of his life, till prepared to deny himself readily in it. 'Tis a riddle, but two considerations will unfold it. *First*; then (and not till then) is that which hinders the enjoyment of our lives taken away, and that is fear; where this is, there is torment. The out-setting Deere is observ'd to be leane (though where good food is) because alwayes in fear. And so must they needs be in the midst of all their enjoyments, on whose heart this vulture

vulture is continually feeding. There needs nothing else to bring a mans joy into a consumption, than an inordinate fear of losing what he hath present. Let but this get hold of a mans spirit, and once become *Hellish*, and the comfort of his life is gone past recovery. How many by this are more cruel to their lives, than it is possible their worst enemies in the world could be to them? They alas, when they have done their utmost, can kill them but once. But by anticipating their own miseries, they kill themselves a thousand times over, even as oft as the fear of dying comes over their miserable hearts. But, when once the Christian hath got his piece of Armour on, his soul is prepared for death and danger; he sits at the feast, which God in his present providence allows him, and fears no messenger with ill news to knock at his door; yea, he can talk of his dying hour, and not spoile the mirth of his present condition; as carnal men think it does, to whom a discourse of dying in the midst of their junkets, is like the coming in of the officer to attache a company of thieves that are making merry together with their stolen goods about them; or like the wet cloth that *Hanniel* clapt on the King his Masters face; it makes all the joy which flourish'd before, squat in on a sudden, that the poor creatures sit dispirited and all a mort (as we say) till they get out of this affrighting subject; by some diversionment or other, which only relieves them for the present, and puts them out of that particular fit this brought upon them; but leaves them deeper in slavery to such amazement of heart, when ever the same ghost shall appear for the future. Whereas the Christian, that hath this preparation of heart, never tastes more sweetnesse in the enjoyments of this life, than when he dips these morsels in the Meditation of death and eternity. It is no more grief to his heart to think of the remove of these, which makes way for those farre sweeter enjoyments, than it would be to one at a feast, to have the first course taken off, when he hath fed well on it, that the second course of all rare sweet-meats and banqueting-stuff may come on, which it cannot till the other be gone. Holy *David*, *Psal.* 23. 4. 5. brings in (as it were) a deaths head with his feast. In the same breath almost he speaks of his dying. *v.* 4. and of the rich feast he at present sate at through the bounty of God, *verse* 5. to which he was not so eyed by the teeth, but if God that gave him this cheere,

should.

Should call him from it, to look death in the face, he could do it and fear no evil, when in the valley of the shadow thereof. *Pla. 23. 4.* And what think you of the blessed Apostle *Peter* had not he, think you, the true enjoyment of his life? when he could sleep so sweetly in a prison (no desirable place) fast bound between two souldiers, in a comfortable posture) and this the very night before *Herod* would have brought him forth (in all probability to his execution) no likely time (one would think) to get any rest, yet we finde him, even there, thus, and then, so sound a sleep, that the *Angel* who was sent to give him his goal-delivery, smote him on the side to awake him, *Acts 12. 6, 7.* I question whether *Herod* himself slept so well that night, as this his prisoner did. And what was the portion that brought this holy man so quietly to rest? No doubt this preparation of the Gospel of peace; he was ready to die, and that made him able to sleep; why should that break his rest in this world, which (if it had been effected) would have brought him to his eternal rest in the other? Secondly, the more ready and prepared the Christian is to suffer from God, or for God, the more God is engaged to take care for him and of him. A good General is most tender of that souldiers life, who is least tender of it himself. The lesse the Christian values himself, and his interests for Gods sake, the more careful God is of him, either to keep him from suffering, or in it. Both which are meant, *Mat. 16. 28. Whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall finde it. Abraham* was ready to offer up his son, and then God would not suffer him to do it. But if the Lord at any takes the Christians offer, and lets the blow be given (though to the severing of soul and body) he yet shews his tender care of him, by the high esteeme he sets upon their blood; which is not more prodigally spilt by mans cruelty, than carefully gather'd up by God, *precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints.*

Thus we see, that by resigning our selves up readily to the disposal of God, we engage God to take care of us, what ever befalls us. And that man or woman sure (if any other in the world) must needs live comfortably, that hath the care of himself wholly taken off his own shoulders, and roll'd upon God, at whose finding he now lives. The poor widow never was better of it, than when the Prophet kept house for her; she freely parted with her little meal for the Prophets use, and a reward of her faith (in crediting the message he brought from the Lord, so far as to give

give the bread out of her own mouth, and childe, to the Prophet) she is provided for by a miracle, 1 Kings 17. 12, 13. Or when a soul is once thus brought to the foot of God, that it can sincerely say, Lord, here I am, willing to deliver up all I have; and am to be at thy dispose; my will shall be done, when thou hast thy will of me. God accounts himself deeply obliged to look after that soul.

CHAP. XVI.

The number of true Christians but little, seen from this readiness to suffer, that is required in every Christian more or less, with an Exhortation to the duty, from two Arguments.

First, must the Christian stand thus sted in readiness to march at the call of God in any way or weather? This will exceedingly thin and lessen the number of true Christians, to what they appear to be at the first view; by the estimate of an easie, cheap profession. He that should come into our Assemblies, and see them thrackt and wedg'd in so close with multitudes flocking after the Word, might wonder at first to hear the Ministers sink the number of Christians so low, and speak of them, as so little a company. Surely their eyes faile them, that they cannot see wood for trees, Christians for multitudes of Christians that stand before them. This very thing made one of the Disciples ask Christ with no little strangeness at it. *Lord, are there few that shall be saved?* Luke 13. 23. Observe the occasion of this question. *Christ, v. 22.*

W/s. 12.

Went through the Cities and Villages, teaching and journeying towards Jerusalem. He saw Christ so free of his pains, to preach at every town he came, and people throng after him, with great expressions of joy that tell from many, *ver. 17. Then said he, Lord, are there few that shall be saved?* As if he had said, This seems very strange, and almost incredible. To see the way to heaven strewned so thick with people, and the means of salvation in such request, and yet but few saved at last; how can this be? Now mark our Saviours unriddling this Myste.y. And he said to them it seems the man spoke more than his own scruple) *strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek, but shall not be able,* *ver. 24.* As if Christ had said, you judge by a wrong rule. If profession would serve the turne, and flocking after Sermons with some seeming joy at the word, were enough to save, heaven would soon be full. But as you love your souls, do not bould or try your selves by this course five; *but strive to enter, as will 2e, fight and wrestle, venture life and limb, rather than fall short of heaven. For many shall seek, but shall not be able;* that is, seek by an easie profession, and cheap Religion, such as is hearing the Word, performance of duties, and the like; of this kinde there are many that will come and walk about heaven door, willing enough to enter, if they may do it without ruffling their pride in a crowd, or hazarding their present carnal interest by any contest and scuffle. But they shall not be able, that is, to enter; because their carnal cowardly hearts shall not be able to strive; so that take Christians under the notion of *Seekers*, and by Christs own Words, they are many; but consider them under the notion of *Strivers*, such as stand ready shod with a holy resolution, to strive even to blood (if such trials meet them in the way to heaven) rather than not enter. And then the number of Christian souldiers will shrink like *Gideons* goodly host, to a little troop. O how easie were it to instance in several sorts of Christians (so called in a large sense) that have not this Gospel-shoe to their foot, and therefore sure to founder and falter, when once they be brought to go upon sharp stones!

SECT. I.

First, The ignorant Christian, what work is he like to make of suffering for Christ and his Gospel? And they are not the least number in many Congregations, they who have not so much light of knowledge in their understanding, as to know who Christ is, and what he hath done for them, will they have so much heart of love as to march chearfully after him, when every step they take, must fetch blood from them? *Nabal* thought he gave a rational Answer to *David's* servants (that asked some relief of him in their present strait) when he said, *Shall I take my bread and my water, and my flesh, that I have kill'd for my shearers, and give it to men I know not whence they b.?* 1 Sam. 25. 11. He thought it too much to part with, upon so little acquaintance. And will the ignorant person think you, be ready to part, not only with his bread and flesh out of the Pot (a little of his Estate I mean) but the flesh of his own body, if called to suffer, and all this at the command of Christ, who is one he knows not whence he is? *Paul* gives this as the Reason why he suffer'd, and was not ashamed, for (saith he) *I know whom I have believed,* 2 Tim. 1. 12. Story tells us of the *Samaritans* (a mungrel kind of people) both in their Descent and Religion) that when it went well with the people of God the *Israelites*, then they would claim kindred with them, and be *Jews*; but when the Church of God was under any outward affliction, than they would disclaim it again. And we may the less wonder at this base cowardly spirit in them, if we read the Character Christ gives of them, to be a people *that worshipt they knew not what*; John 4. 22. Religion hath but loose hold of them that have no better hold of it, than a blind mans hand.

Secondly, Carnal Gospellers, who keep possession of their lusts, while they make profession of Christ. A generation these are, that have nothing to prove themselves Christians by, but their Baptism, and a Christian-name which they have obtained thereby; such as were they to live among *Turks* and *Heathens*, their language and conversations (did they but conceal whence they came) would never bewray them to be Christians; can it now be rationally thought, that these are the men and women who stand

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ready

ready to suffer for Christ and his Gospel? No sure, they who will not wear Christs yoke, will much less bear his burden. If the yoke of the command be thought grievous, that binds them to duty, they will much more think the burden of the Cross insupportable. He that will not do for Christ, will not dye for Christ. That servant is very unlike to fight to blood in his Masters quarrel, that will not work for him, so as to sweat in his service.

3. Thirdly, The Politick Professor. A fundamental Article in whose Creed is to save himself not from sin, but from danger; and therefore he studies the times more than the Scriptures, and is often looking what corner the wind lies in, that accordingly he may shape his course, and order his profession, which like the Hedge-hogs house, ever opens towards the warm side.

4. Fourthly, The Covetous Professor, whose heart and head are so full of worldly projects, that suffering for Christ must needs be very unwelcome to him, and find him far enough from such a disposition. You know what the Egyptians said of the Israelites, *They are intangled in the land, the Wilderness hath shut them in*, Exod. 14. 13. More true it is of this sort of Professors; they are intangled in the World; this Wilderness hath shut them in. A man whose foot is in a snare, is as fit to walk and run; as they to follow Christ; when to do it, may prejudice their worldly interest. Our Saviour speaking of the miseries that were to come on *Jerusalem*, *Woe* (saith he) *unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those dayes*, Mat. 24. 19. Because it would be more difficult for them to escape the danger by flight: The big-bellied mother being unable to flie fast enough with her Child in her womb, and the Nurse as unwilling to leave her dear Babe behind her. But many more woes to them, who in dayes and tryals, and persecution for the Gospel, shall be found big with the World, or that give suck to any covetous inordinate affection to the creatures; such will find it hard to escape the temptation, that these will beset them with. It is impossible in such a time to keep Estate and Christ together. And as impossible for a heart that is set upon the World, to be willing to leave it for Christs company.

Fifthly, The Conceited Professor, who hath an high opinion of himself,

himself, and is so far from an humble holy jealousie and fear of himself, that he is self-confident. Here is a man shod and prepared he thinks, but not with the right Gospel-shoe. By strength shall no man prevail, 1 Sam. 2. 9. He that in *Queen Maries* dayes was so free of his flesh for Christ (as he said) he would see his far melt in the fire (of which he had good store) rather than fall back to Popery, lived (poor man) to see this his Resolution melt, and himself cowardly part with his faith, to save his far. Those that glory of their Valor, when they put on the Harness, ever put it off with shame. The heart of man is deceitful above all things, a very *Jacob* that will supplant its own self. He that cannot take the length of his own foot, how can he of himself fit a shoe to it?

SECT. II.

Be exhorted all you that take the Name of Christ upon you, to get this shoe of preparation on, and keep it on, that you may be ready at all times to follow the call of Gods Providence, though it should lead you into a suffering condition. Take but two Motives.

Use 2.

First, Consider (Christian) suffering work may overtake thee suddenly, before thou art aware of it, therefore be ready shod. Sometimes orders come to Souldiers for a sudden march, they have not so much as an houres warning, but must be gone as soon as the Drum bears. And so mayst thou be call'd out (Christian) before thou art aware into the field, either to suffer for God, or from God. *Abraham* had little time given him to deal with his heart, and perswade it into a compliance with God, for offering his son *Isaac*. A great tryal, and short warning, Gen. 22. 2. Take now thy son, thy only son *Isaac*, not a year, a month, a week hence; but Now. This was in the Night, and *Abraham* is gone early in the morning, v. 3. How would he have entertained this strange News, if he had been then to gain the consent of his heart? but that was not now to do; God had *Abrahams* heart already, and therefore he doth not now dispute his order, but obeyes. God can make a sudden alteration in thy private Affairs

I.

Christian; how couldst thou in thy perfect strength and health, endure to hear the message of death? if God should before any lingering sickness hath brought thee into some acquaintance with Death, say no more, but Up and dye, as once to *Moses*: Art thou shod for such a journey? Couldst thou say, *Good is the Word of the Lord*? What if in one day thou wert to step out of honor into disgrace, to be strip of thy silks and velvets, and in vile Raiment call'd to set a Beggars part? Couldst thou rejoyce that thou art made low, and find thy heart ready to bless the most High? This would speak thee a soul evangelically shod indeed.

Again, God can as soon change the Scene in the publick Affairs of the times thou livest in, as to the Gospel and profession of it. May be now *Authority* smiles on the Church of God, but within a while it may frown, and the storm of persecution arise, *Acts 9. 31.* Then had the Churches rest throughout all Judea, this was a blessed time; but how long did it last? Alas not long, *Chap. 12.* There is sad news of a bloody persecution, *v. 1.* About this time Herod the King stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the Church; in which persecution, James the brother of John lost his life by his cruel Sword; and Peter in Prison, like to go to the same shambles. And the Church driven into a corner to pray in the Night together, *v. 12.* O what a sad change is here? now in blood, who even now had rest on every side. It is observ'd that in *Islands*, the weather is far more variable and uncertain, than in the *Continent*; here you may know ordinarily what weather will be for a long time together; but in *Islands*, in the morning we know not what weather will be before night; we have oftentimes Summer and Winter in the same day, and all this is imputed to the near neighbourhood of the Sea that surrounds them. The Saints in Heaven, they live (as I may so say) on the *Continent*. A blessed constancy of peace and rest there enjoyed, They may know by what peace and bliss they have at present, what they have to Eternity; but here below, the Church of Christ is as a floating Island, compassed with the World (I mean men of the World) as with a Sea; And these sometimes blow hot, and sometimes cold; sometimes they are still and peaceable, and sometimes enraged and cruel; even as God binds up, or lets loose their wrath. Now Christian, doth it not beboove thee to be

always in a readiness? when thou knowest not but the next moment the wind may turn into the cold corner, and the times which now favour the Gospel, so as to fill the Sails of thy profession with all encouragement, may on a sudden blow full on thy face, and oppose it as much, as it did before countenance it?

Secondly, Consider if thy feet be not shod with a preparation to suffer for Christ here on Earth, thy head cannot be crown'd in Heaven, *Rom. 8. 17. If children, then heirs, heirs of God, joynt heirs with Christ.* Now mark the following words, *If so be we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together;* 'tis true, all the Saints do not dye Martyrs at a stake, but every Saint must have a Spirit of Martyrdom (as I may so call it) a heart prepared for suffering. God never intended *Isaac* should be sacrificed, yet he will have *Abraham* lay the knife to his throat. Thus God will have us lay our neck on the block, and be (as *Paul* said of himself) *bound in the spirit*, under a sincere purpose of heart to give up our selves to his will and pleasure, which is called a *presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God*, *Rom. 12. 1.* That as the Jew brought the beast alive, and presented it freely before him to be done withall as God had commanded; so we are to present our bodies before God to be disposed of as he commands, both in active and passive obedience. He that refuseth to suffer for Christ, refuseth also to reign with Christ. *The putting off the shoe among the Jews*, was a sign of a mans putting off the right of an inheritance, *Deut. 25. 9, 10.* Thus did *Elimlech's* Kinsman, when he renounced and disclaimed any right that he might have in his Estate, he *drew off his shoe*; *Ruth 4. 7, 8.* O Christian, take heed of putting off thy Gospel-shoe; by this thou dost disclaim thy right in Heavens inheritance, no portion is there laid up for any that will not suffer for Christ. The persecutions which the Saints endure for the Gospel are made by *Paul* an evident token to them of salvation, and that of God *Phil. 1. 28.* Surely then the denying Christ to escape suffering, is a sad token of perdition. O Sirs, is not Heavens inheritance worth enduring a little trouble for it? *Naboths Vineyard* was no great matter, yet rather than he would (not lose it, but) sell it to its worth, or change it for a better in another place, he chose to lay his life at stake by provoking a mighty King. Thou canst Christian, venture

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no more for thy heavenly inheritance, than he paid for refusing to alienate his petty patrimony of an Acre or two of land (thy temporal life I mean.) And besides the odds between his Vineyard on Earth, and thy Paradise in Heaven (which is infinite, and suffers no proportion;) Thou hast this advantage also of him in thy sufferings for Christ. When *Naboth* lost his life, he lost his inheritance also, that he so strove to keep; but thy persecuting enemies shall do thee this friendly office against their wills, that when they dispossess thee of thy life, they shall help thee into possession of thy inheritance.



CHAP. XVII.

Six Directions for the helping on of this spiritual shooe.

Quest.

Quest. **T**He great Question I now expect to fall from thy mouth (Christian) is, not how thou mayst escape these troubles and tryals which (as the *evil Geni* of the Gospel) do alwayes attend it; but rather, how thou mayst get this shooe on, thy heart ready for a march, to go and meet them when they come, and cheerfully wade through them, whatever they be, or how long soever they stay with thee?

Ans.

Ans. This is a question well-becoming a Christian-souldier; to ask for Armor wherewith he may fight, whereas the Coward throws away his Armor, and asks whither he may flee. I shall therefore give the best counsel I can in these few particulars.

SECT. I.

I.

First, Look carefully to the ground of thy active obedience, that it be sound and sincere. The same right principles whereby the sincere soul acts for Christ, will carry him to suffer for Christ, when a call from God comes with such an errand. *The children of Ephraim being armed, and carrying bowes, turned back in the day of battel; Psal. 78. 9.* Why? what is the matter? so well-armed, and yet so cowardly? This seems strange, read the precedent verse, and you will cease wondering; they are called there, *A generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.* Let the Armor be what it will, yea, if Souldiers were in a Castle whose foundation were Rock, & walls brasse, yet if their hearts be not right to their Prince, an easie storm will drive them from the walls, and a little scare open their gate, which hath not this bolt of sincerity on it to hold it fast: In our late Wars we have seen that honest hearts within thin and weak works, have held the Town, when no walls could defend treachery from betraying trust. O labour for sincerity in the engaging at first for God and his Gospel. Be oft asking thy own soul for whom thou prayest, hearest, reformest this practice, and that. If thou canst get a satisfactory answer from thy soul here, thou mayst hope well; if faiths working hand be sincere, then its fighting hand will be valiant. That place is observable, *Hebr. 11. 33. Who through faith subdued Kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of Lions, quenched the violence of fire; and with other great things that faith enabled them to endure, as you may read in the 34, 35, 36. verses.* Where I pray note, how the power of faith enabling the Christian to work righteousness (that is, live holily and righteously) is reckon'd among the wonders of sufferings, which it strengthened them to endure. Indeed had it not done this, it would never have endured these.

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S E C T. II.

2. Secondly, Pray for a suffering spirit; this is not a common gift, which every carnal Gospeller, and slighty professor hath. No; it is a peculiar gift, and bestowed but on a few sincere souls; *Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake*, Phil. i. 26. All the parts and common gifts that a man hath, will never enable him to drink deep of this Cup for Christ; such is the pride of mans heart, he had rather suffer any way than this; rather from himself, and for himself, than from Christ; or for Christ; you would wonder to see sometimes how much a Child will endure at his play, and never cry for it; this fall, and that knock, and no great matter is made of it by him, because got in a way that is pleasing to him, but let his father whip him, though it puts him not to ha'f the smart, yet he roars and takes on, that there is no quieting of him. Thus men can bring trouble on the selves, and bite in their complaints. They can, one play away his Estate at Cards and Dice, and another whore away his health, or cut off many years from his life, by beastly drunkenness; and all is endured patiently; yea, if they had their money and strength again, they should go the same way; they do not repent of what their lusts have cost them, but morn they have no more to bestow upon them; their lusts shall have all they have to a morsel of bread in their Cupboard, and drop of blood in their veins; yea, they are not afraid of burning in Hell, as their sins *Martyrs*. But come, and ask these, that are so free of their purse, flesh, soul, and all, in lusts service, to lay their estate or life for a few moments at stake in Christs cause and his truths; and you shall see that God is not so much beholden to them. And therefore pray and pray again for a suffering spirit in Christs cause; yea, Saints themselves need earnestly plead with God for this. Alas! they do not find suffering work follow their hand so easily. The flesh loves to be cocker'd, not crucifi'd; many a groan it costs the Christian, before he can learn to love this work. Now prayer, if any means, will be helpful to thee in this particular. He that can wrestle with God, need not fear the face of death and danger; Prayer engageth

gageth Gods strength and wisdom for our help; and what is too hard for the creature, that hath God at his back for his help, to do or suffer? We are bid to *count it all joy, when we fall into divers temptations*, Jam. 1. 2. Not temptations to sin, but for righteousness; he means troubles for Christ and his Gospel. Ah! but might the poor Christian say, it were cause of more joy to be able to stand under these temptations, than to fall into them. Little joy would it be to have the temptation, and not the grace to endure temptation. True indeed; but for thy comfort Christian, he that leads thee into this temptation, stands ready to help thee through it; Therefore, v. 5. there is a gracious, *si quis*, set up; *If any of you* (i.e. you sufferers chiefly) *lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and without rebuke, and it shall be given him.* This methinks, should not much strein our faith to believe. There are not many Masters so disingenious to be found, that would twit and upbraid their servant for asking humbly their counsel in a work of peril and difficulty, which they cheerfully undertake out of love to their persons and obedience to their command; how much less needst thou fear such dealing from thy God? If thou hast so much faith and love, as to venture at his command upon the Sea of suffering; he'll without doubt find so much mercy, as to keep thee from drowning, if feeling thy self begin to sink, thou cryest earnestly as Peter did to him, *Lord save me*; wert thou even under water, prayer would boie thee up again. But if thou beest not a man of prayer before suffering work come, thou wilt be able to do little at that weapon then.

The Proverb indeed is. *He that would learn to pray, let him go to sea.* But I think it were better thus, *He that would go to sea (this I mean of suffering) let him learn to pray, before he comes there.*

SECT. III.

Thirdly, Be much in the meditation of a suffering state. He'll say his Lesson best, when his Master calls him forth, that is offered conning it over before hand to himself, do by the troubles thou mayst meet with, as *Pardons* use to do with their burdens, they will sift them again and again, before they take them on to their back. Thus do thou be often listing up in thy meditations those evils that may befall thee for Christ and his truth; and try

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how thou couldst fadge with them, if called to endure them ; set poverty, prison, banishment, fire and fagot before thee on the one hand, and the precious truths of Christ on the other, with the sweet promises made to those that shall hold fast the word of patience held forth in such an hour of temptation. Suppose it were now thy very case, and thou wert put to thy choice, which hand thou wouldst take ; study the question seriously, till thou determinest it clearly in thy conscience ; and do this often, that the Arguments which flesh and blood will then be sure to use for thy pitying thy self, may not be new and unanswered ; nor the encouragements and strong consolations, which the Word affords, be strange, and under any suspicion in thy thoughts, when thou art to venture thy life upon their credit and truth. That of *Augustine* we shall find most true, *Non facile inveniantur praesidia in adversitate, quae non fuerint in pace quaesita*. The promises are our Garrison and fastness at such time ; and we shall not find it easie to run to them in a streight, except we were acquainted with them in a time of peace ; a stranger that flies to a house for Refuge in the dark night, he fumbles about the door, and knows not how to find the latch ; his enemy, if nigh, may kill him before he can open the door ; but one that lives in the house, or is well acquainted with it, is not long a getting in. *Come my people* (saith God) *enter thou into thy chambers*, Isa. 26. He is shewing them their lodgings in his attributes and promises, before it is night, and their sufferings be come, that they may readily find the way to them in the dark.

SECT. IV.

4. Fourthly, Make a daily resignation of thy self up to the Will of God. Indeed this should be, as it were, the lock of the night, and key of the morning ; we should open and shut our eyes with this recommending of our selves into the hands of God. This if daily perform'd, not formally (as all duties frequently repeated, without the more care are like to be) but solemnly, would sweetly dispose the soul for a welcoming of any tryal that can befall him. The awkness of our hearts to suffer, comes much from distrust.

distrust. An unbelieving soul treads upon the promise, as a man upon ice; At first going upon it, it is full of fears and tumultuous thoughts, lest it should crack; now this daily resignation of thy heart, as it will give thee an occasion of conversing more with the thoughts of Gods power, faithfulness, and other of his attributes (for want of familiarity with which, jealousies arise in our hearts when put to any great plunge) so also it will furnish thee with many experiences of the reality both of his attributes and promises; which though they need not any testimony from sense, to gain them credit with us, yet so much as we made of sense, so childish and weak is our faith, that we find our hearts much helped by those experiences we have had, to rely on him for the future. Look therefore carefully to this, every morning leaves thy self and wayes in Gods hand, as the phrase is, *Ps. 10. 14.* And at night look again, how well God hath look't to his trust, and sleep not till thou hast affected thy heart with his faithfulness, and laid a stronger charge on thy heart to trust it self again in Gods keeping in the night. And when any breach is made, and seeming loss befalls thee in any enjoyment, which thou hast by faith ensured of thy God, observe how God fills up that breach, and makes up that loss to thee; and rest not, till thou hast fully vindicated the good Name of God to thy own heart; be sure thou let'st no discontent or dissatisfaction lie upon thy spirit at Gods dealings; but chide thy heart for it, as *David* did his, *Psalm. 42.* And thus doing with Gods blessing, thou shalt keep thy faith in breath for a longer Race, when called to run it.

SECT. V.

Fifthly, Make self-denial appear as rational and reasonable as thou canst to thy soul; the stronger the understanding is able to reason for the equity and rationality of any work or duty, the more readily and cheerfully (if the heart be honest and sincere) is it done; suppose Christian, thy God should call for thy Estate, liberty, yea, life and all, can it seem unreasonable to thee especially,

First, If thou considerest that he bids thee deliver his own,

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not thy own. He lent thee these, but he never gave away the propriety of them from himself; dost thou wrong thy neighbour, to call for that money thou lent'st him a year or two past? no sure; thou thinkest he hath Reason to thank thee for lending it to him, but none to complain for calling it from him.

Col. 2. 7, 8, 9.

Secondly, Consider, he doth not, indeed cannot bid thee deny so much for him, as he hath done for thee. Is Reproach for Christ so intolerable, that thy proud spirit cannot brook it? why, who art thou? what great House comest thou from? see one, that had more honour to lay at stake than I hope thou darest pretend to; Jesus Christ, *who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation.* Is it pain and torment thou art afraid of? O look up to the Cross where the Lord of life hung for thy sins: And thou wilt take up thy own Cross more willingly, and thank God too, that he hath made thine so light and easie, when he provided one so heavy and tormenting for his beloved Son.

Thirdly, Consider whatever God calls thee to deny for his truth, it is not more than he can recompence. *Moses* saw this, and that made him leap out of his honors and riches into the reproach of Christ, *For he had respect to the recompence of reward,* Heb. 11. 26. It is much that a man will deny himself in, for something his heart strongly desires in this life. If a man be greedy of gain, he will deny himself of half the nights sleep, to plot in his bed, or rise early from it to be at his work, he will eat homely fare, go in vile rayment, dwell in a smoky hole (as we see in *London*) for the conveniency of a shop, how men of quality will crowd themselves up into a little corner, though to the prejudice of their healths, and hazard sometimes of their lives, yet hope of gain recompence all. And now put their gains into the scale with thine (Christian) that art sure to come in by denying thy self for Christ, (which theirs are not) and ask thy soul, whether it blush not to see them so freely deny themselves of the comfort of their lives for an imaginary, uncertain, at best a short advantage, while thou hudlest to with Christ for a few outward enjoyments, which shall be paid thee over an hundred fold here, and beyond what thou canst now conceive, when thou comest to Heavens glory.

SECT. VI.

Sixthly, Labour to carry on the work of mortification every day, to further degrees than other. 'Tis the sap in the wood that makes it hard to burn, and corruption unmortified that makes the Christian loth to suffer; dry'd Wood will not kindle sooner, than a heart dried and mortified to the lusts of the world; will endure any thing for Christ. The *Apostle* speaks of some that were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection, Heb. 11. 35. They did not like the World so well, as being so far on their journey to Heaven (though in hard way) to be willing to come back to live in it any longer. Take heed Christian, of leaving any worldly lust unmortified in thy soul; this will never consent thou shouldest endure much for Christ; few ships sink at Sea; they are the rocks and shelves that split them; couldst thou get off the rocks of pride and unbelief, and scape knocking on the sands of fear of man, love of the World, and the like lusts; thou wouldst do well enough in the greatest storm that can overtake thee in the Sea of this World. *If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a Vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for his Masters use, and prepared unto every good work,* 2 Tim. 2. 21. O that we knew the Heaven that is in a mortified soul! one that is crucified to the World, and lusts of it; He hath the advantage of any other in doing or suffering for Christ, and enjoying Christ in both. A mortified soul lives out of all noise and disturbance from those carnal passions which put all out of quiet where they come. When the mortified soul goes to duty, here are not those rude and unmannerly intrusions of impertinent, carnal, yea, sinful thoughts between him and his God. Is he to go to Prison? here is not such weeping and taking on; no lust to hang about his legs, and break his heart with its insinuations; no self-love to entreat him that he would pity himself; his heart is free, got out of the acquaintance of these troublers of his peace, and a Prison to him, if he may go upon so honorable an errand, as testifying to the truth is; O how welcom is it to him! whereas an unmortified heart is wedg'd in with so great acquaintance and kindred (as I may so say) which his heart bath

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hath in the World, that it is impossible to get out of their embraces into any willingness to suffer. A man that comes into an Inn in a strange place, he may rise at what time he pleaseth, and be gone as early as he pleaseth in the morning; There are none entreat him to stay. But hard to get out of a friends house; these like the *Levites* father-in-law, will be desiring him to stay one day, and then one more, and another after that. The mortified soul is the stranger; he meets with no disturbance (I mean comparatively) in his journey to Heaven, while the unmortified one is linkt in fast enough for getting on his journey in haste, especially so long as the flesh hath so fair an excuse as the foulness of the way or weather, any hardship likely to be endured for his profession. I have read of one of the *Catoes*, that in his old age he withdrew himself from *Rome* to his Countrey-house, that he might spend his elder years free from care and trouble. And all the *Romans* as they rode by his house, used to say, *Iste solus scit vivere.* This man alone knows how to live. I know not what *Art Cato* had to disburden himself (by his retiring) of the Worlds cares; I am sure, a man may go into the Countrey, and yet not leave the City behind him; his mind may be in a crowd, while his body is in the solitude of a Wilderness. Alas poor man, he was a stranger to the Gospel; had he been but acquainted with this, it could have shewn him a way out of the Worlds crowd, in the midst of *Rome* it self, and that is by mortifying his heart to the World both in the pleasures and troubles of it; and then that high commendation might have been given him without an *hyperbole*; for to speak truth, He only knows aright how to live in the World, that hath learnt to dye to the World. And so much for the first Point; which was, that the Christian is to stand ready for all tryals and troubles that may befall him. The second follows, which is —



CHAP. XVIII.

Sheweth who is the person that is shod and prepared for sufferings, i. e. he that hath the Gospels peace in his bosom; and how this peace doth prepare for suffering, with a brief Application of all.

THAT he who enjoys the peace of the Gospel in his bosom, is the person, and the only person, that stands shod for all wayes, prepared for all troubles and tryals.

Doct. 2.

SECT. I.

None can make a shooe to the creatures foot, so as he shall go easie on hard way, but Christ; he can do it to the creatures full content; and how doth he it? Truly no other way, than by underlaying it; or if you will, lining it with the peace of the Gospel; what though the way be set with sharp stones? if this shooe go between the Christians foot and them, they cannot much be felt. Solomon tells us, *The wayes of wisdom* (that is Christ) *are wayes of pleasantness.* But how so, when some of them are wayes of suffering? the next words resolve us, *And all her paths are peace,* Prov. 3. 17. where there is peace, such peace as peace with God and conscience, there can want no pleasure. David goes merry to bed; when he hath nothing to Supper, but the gladness that God
by

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by this puts into his heart, and promiseth himself a better nights rest than any of them all, that are feasted with the Worlds chear, *Psal. 47. 8. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace and sleep.* This same peace which God enjoy'd in the Conscience, redounds to the comfort of the body. Now David can sleep sweetly, when he lies on a hard Bed what here he saith he would do, *Psal. 3. 5. He saith he had done, I laid me down and slept, I awaked, for the Lord sustained me.* The Title of the Psalm tells us, when David had this sweet Nights rest; not when he lay on his Bed of Doun in his stately Palace at Jerusalem, but when he fled for his life from his unnatural son Absalom, and possibly was forced to lie in the open field under the Canopy of Heaven. Truly it must be a soft pillow indeed, that could make him forget his danger; who then had such a disloyal Army at his back hunting of him; yea, so transcendent is the sweet influence of this peace, that it can make the creature lie down as chearfully to sleep in the Grave, as on the softest Bed; you will say that child is willing, that calls to be put to Bed; some of the Saints have desired God to lay them at rest in their Beds of dust; and that not in a pet and discontent with their present trouble, as Job did; but from a sweet sense of this peace in their bosoms. Now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, was the Swan-like song of old Simeon. He speaks like a Merchant, that had got all his goods on ship-board, and now desires the Master of the ship to hoise sail, and be gone homewards. Indeed what should a Christian, that is but a Forreigner here, desire to stay any longer for in the World, but to get this full lading in for Heaven? And when hath he that, if not when he is assured of his peace with God? This peace of the Gospel, and sense of the love of God in the soul, doth so admirably conduce to the enabling of a person in all difficulties and temptations, and troubles; that ordinarily before he calls his Saints to any hard service, or hot work, he gives them a draught of this cordial Wine next their hearts to chear them up, and imbolden them in the conflict. God calls Abram out of his native Countrey, *Gen. 12. 1.* And what so fit, as a promise of Christ to bring his heart to Gods foot, *v. 2. 3.* A sad errand it was that sent Jacob to Padan-Aram; he fled from an angry wrathful Brother,

ther that had murdered him already in his thoughts, to an unkind deceitful *Uncle*, under whom he should endure much hardship.

Now God comes in a sweet Gospel-vision to comfort this poor pilgrim; for by *that ladder, whose foot stood on earth, and top reached heaven*. Christ was signified to his faith in whom Heaven and Earth meet, God and man are reconciled; and by the *moving up and down of the Angels on the ladder*, the Ministry of the Angels, which Christ by his death and intercession procures for his Saints, that they shall tend on them, as servants on their Masters children; so that the sum of all, is as much as if God had said, *Jacob*, thy brother *Esau* hates thee, but in *Christ* I am reconciled to thee; thy *Uncle Laban*, he will wrong thee, and deal hardly by thee, but fear him not; As I am in Christ at peace with thee, so through him thou shalt have my especial care over thee, and the guardianship of the holy *Angels* about thee, to defend thee where ever thou goest. The *Israelites*, when ready to take their march out of *Egypt* into a desolate Wildernesse, where they should be put to many plunges, and their faith tryed to purpose; to prepare them the more for these, he entertains them at a Gospel-supper before they go forth, I mean the Passover, which pointed to *Christ*; and no doubt the sweetness of this feast, made some gracious souls among them (that tasted Christ in it) endure the hardship and hunger of the Wildernesse the more cheerfully. And the same care and love did our *Lord Jesus* observe in the institution of his Supper, choosing that for the time of erecting this sweet Ordinance, when his Disciples feet stood at the brink of a Sea of sorrows and troubles, which his death, and the consequences of it, would inevitably bring upon them. Now the pardon of their sins seal'd to their souls in that Ordinance, must needs be welcom, and enable them to wade through their sufferings the more comfortably. Indeed the great care which Christ took for his Disciples, when he left the world, was not to leave them a quiet world to live in, but to arm them against a troublefom world; and to do this, he labours to satisfy their poor hearts with his love to them, and his Fathers love to them for his sake; he bequeaths unto them his peace, and empties it in the sweet consolations of it into their bosoms; for which end he tells them, as soon as he got to Heaven, he would *pray his Father to send the*

(P P P)

Comforter

Comforter to them with all speed, and sends them to *Jerusalem*, there to stay privately, and not go into the field, or openly contest with the angry world, till they received the strength and succour which the Spirit in his comforts should bring with him. By all which it doth abundantly appear, how powerful this Gospel-peace is to enable the soul for suffering. Now I proceed to shew how this peace doth prepare the heart for all sufferings. And that it doth these two wayes.

1. First, As it brings along with it, and possesseth the soul (where it comes) with such glorious privileges, as lift it above all danger and damage from any sufferings whatever, from God, Man or Devils.
2. Secondly, As it is influential into the Saints graces and affections, exciting them, and making them act to such a height, as lifts the Christian above the fear of trouble and suffering.

SECT. II.

1. First, By possessing the believing soul of such glorious privileges as secure it from any real hurt that the worst of sufferings can do it. If a man could be assured, that he might walk as safely on the waves of the Sea, or in the flames of fire, as he doth in his Garden, he would be no more afraid of the one, than he is to do the other; or if a man had some coat of mail secretly about him, that would undoubtedly resist all blows, and quench all shot that are sent against him, it would be no such fearful thing for him to stand in the midst of Swords and Guns: Now the soul that is indeed at peace with God, is invested with such privileges as do set it above all hurt and damage from sufferings. *The peace of God* (is said) *to garrison the believers heart and mind*, Phil. 4. 7. He is surrounded with such blessed privileges, that he is as safe as one in an impregnable Castle. A person at peace with God, becomes then a Child of God. And when once the Christian comes to know his relation, and the dear love of his heavenly Father to him, afflictions from, or sufferings from him, dread him not, because he knows it is inconsistent with the love of a father, either

to hurt his Child, himself, or suffer him to be hurt by another, if he can help it. I have often wondred at *Isaac's* patience to submit to be bound for a sacrifice, and see the Knife so near his throat, without any hideous out-cry or struglings that we read of; he was old enough to be apprehensive of death, and the horror of it, being conceiv'd by some to be above twenty years of age; that he was of good growth, is out of doubt by the wood which *Abraham* caused him to carry for the sacrifice; but such was the authority *Abraham* had over his son, and the confidence that *Isaac* had in his father, that he durst put his life into his hands, which, had the Knife been in any other hand, he would hardly have done; whoever may be the instrument of any trouble to a Saint, the Rod or Sword is at Gods disposeure. Christ saw the Cup in his Fathers hand, and that made him take it willingly. Secondly, Every soul at peace with God, is heir to God. This follows his relation; *If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joynt-heirs with Christ*, Rom. 8.17. This is such a transcendent privilege, that the soul to whom the joyful news of it comes, is lifted up above the amazing and affrightning fears of any suffering. The Apostle having (in the forenamed place) but a little sweeten'd his thoughts with a few meditations on this soul-ravishing Subject, see how his blessed soul is raised into a holy sleighting of all the troubles of this life; *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us*, ver. 18. He will not allow his own soul, or any that hath the hope of this inheritance, so far to undervalue the glory thereof, or the love of God that settled it on them, as to mention the greatness of their sufferings in any way of pitying themselves for them. As if he had said, Hath God made us his heirs, and bestowed Heaven upon us in reversion? And shall we be so poor-spirited, to sit down and bemoan our selves for our present sorrows, that are no more to be compared with the glory that we are going to, than the little point of time (into which our short life with all our sufferings are contracted) is to be compared with the vast circumference of that eternity which we are to spend in endless bliss and happiness? He is a poor man we say, that one or two petty losses quite undoes. And he a poor Christian, that cries out he is undone by any Cross in this life; we may safely conclude such a one either is heir to nothing in

the other world, or hath little or no evidence for what he hath there.

2. Secondly, This peace shooes and prepares the Christian for sufferings, as it is influential into his graces and affections; making them act to such a height, as lifts him above the fear of any suffering.

1. *First*, This peace where it is felt, makes the Christian unconquerable in his faith. Nothing is too hard for such a one to believe that carries a pardon in his conscience, and hath his peace with God sealed to him. *Moses* was to meet with many difficulties in that great work of conducting *Israel* out of *Egypt* towards *Canaan*; therefore to make them all a more easie conquest to his faith, when he should be assaulted with them, God gives him at his very first entering upon his charge an experiment of his mighty power in some miracles, as the turning his rod in a Serpent, and that again into a rod, making his hand leprous, and then restoring it again to be as sound as before, that he might never think any thing too hard for that God to do towards their salvation and deliverance, when things seem most desperate; and how unconquerable *Moses* was after these in his faith, we see. Truly, when God speaks to a poor soul, he gives such a testimony of his Almighty power and love, that so long as the sweet sense of this lasts in the soul, the creatures faith cannot be posed; what doth God in his pardoning mercy, but turn the Serpent of the Law with all its threatnings, from which the sinner fled, as that which would sting him to death, into the blossoming Rod of the Gospel, that brings forth the sweet fruit of peace and life? And which is the greater miracle of the two think you, *Moses* his leprous hand made clean and sound, or a poor sinners heart leprous with sin, made clean and pure by washing in the blood of Christ? certainly this miracle of mercy, where it is strongly believed to be done, will make it easie for that soul to trust God in a Sea of temporal sufferings, and cheerfully follow him through a whole wilderness of troubles in this life. When *David* hath comfortable apprehensions of Gods pardoning mercy, then his faith is up, and can strongly act on God for temporal deliverance. *Pf. 32*. We find him under the sweet sense of his peace with God, able to vouch God as reconciled to him; *I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin,*
verse

verse 5. And now see to what a height his faith acts on God as to outward troubles, *verse 7. Thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble, thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.* He spells this, which is the less, from the other that is incomparably the greater mercy.

Secondly, This peace with God, where it is felt, fills the heart with love to Christ. The Christians love to Christ takes fire at Christs love to him. And the hotter Christs love lies on the soul, the stronger reflection doth the creature make of love to him again. *See loved much, to whom much was forgiven, Luk. 7. 47.* And the more love, the less fear there will be of suffering. We'll venture far for a dear friend; when *Christ* told his Disciples, *Lazarus was dead*; *Thomas* would needs go and dye with him for company, *John 11. 16.* So powerful is love, even as strong as death; *For a good man* (saith the Apostle) *some would even dare to dye*; that is a merciful, kind man, whose love had endeared him to them. How much more daring will a gracious soul be to sacrifice his life for a good God? *Thy name* (saith the Spouse of Christ) *is as ointment poured forth, therefore the Virgins love thee, Cant. 1. 2.* Then Christs name is poured forth, when the love of God through him is shed abroad in the soul. Let this precious box be but broke, and the sweet savour of it diffused in the heart, and it will take away the unfavoury scent of the most stinking prison in the World. This heavenly fire of Christs love, beaming powerfully on the soul, will not only put out the Kitchen-fire of creature-love, but also the Hell-fire (as I may call it) of slavish fear: What makes us so agast at the thoughts of death, especially if it comes towards us in a bloody dress, and hath some circumstances of persecutors cruelty, to put a further grimness on its displeasing countenance? surely this comes from guilt and unacquaintance with Christ, and what he hath done for us; who came partly on this very errand into the world, *To deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage, Heb. 2. 15.* And how hath he done it? but by reconciling us to God, and so reconciling us to the thoughts of death it self, as that which can only do us this kind office, to bring us and Christ (that hath done all this for us) together.

Thirdly, This peace enjoy'd in the Christians bosom hath a sweet influence into his self-denial. A grace so necessary to suffering, that

that Christ layes the Cross, as I may so say, upon the back of this grace. *Whoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me*, Mark 8. 34. Another (with *Simon of Cyrene*) may be compelled to carry Christ's Cross after him a little way; but 'tis the self-denying soul that will stoop willingly, and down of his knees to have this burthen laid on him at Christ's hand. Now the sense of a souls peace with God, will enable the creature in a two-fold self-denial, and by both sweetly dispose him for any suffering from or for Christ.

First, It will enable him to deny himself in his sinful self. Sin may well be call'd our self, it cleaves so close to us, even as members to our body; as hard to mortifie a lust, as to cut off a joynt. And some sins are more our self than others, as our life is more bound up in some members than others; well, let them be what they will, there is a good day, in which, if Christ asks the head of the proudest lust among them all, he shall have it with less regret than *Herodias* obtain'd the *Baptists* at *Herods hands*. And what is that gaudy day, in which the Christian can so freely deny his sin, and deliver it up to justice, but when Christ is feasting him with this *hidden Manna* of pardon and peace? A true friend will rather deny himself than one he loves dearly, if it be in his power to grant his request; but least of all can he deny him, when his friend is doing him a greater kindness at the same time, that he asks a less. No such picklock to open the heart as love. When love comes a begging, and that at a time when it is shewing it self in some eminent expression of kindness to him at whose door she knocks, there is little fear but to speed. *Esther* chose that time to engage *Ahasuerus's* heart against *Haman* her enemy, when she express her love most to *Ahasuerus*, viz. at a Banquet. When doth God give, or indeed when can he give the like demonstration of his love to a poor soul, as when he entertains it at this Gospel-banquet? Now sure, if ever, God may prevail with his Child to send the cursed *Amalakite* to the Gallows, his lust to the Gibbet; do you think that *Mary Magdalen* when that blessed news dropt from Christ into her mournful heart, that *her sins which were many, were all forgiven her*, could now have been perswaded to have opened the door to any of her former lovers, and gone out of these embraces of Christ's love,

to have paid the whore again? No, I doubt not but she would sooner have chose the flames of Martyrdom, than of lust. Indeed that which can make the creature deny a lust, can make the creature it shall not deny a Cross.

Secondly, The sense of this peace will enable the Christian to deny his carnal enjoyments. And these the Christian finds his great pull-backs from suffering. As the heart burns in the hot fit of love to the pleasures and profits of this World when he abounds with them; in that degree will his shaking fit of fear and grief be, when Christ calls him to part with them. What the sweet Wines and dainty fare of *Capua* was to *Hanibals* Soldiers, that we shall find any intemperance of heart to the creature will be to us; it will enervate our spirits, and so effeminate us that we shall have little mind to endure hardship, when drawn into the field to look an enemy in the face. Now the sense of this Gospel-peace, will dead the heart to the creature, and facilitate the work of self-denial, as to the greatest enjoyments the World hath. God forbid (saith Paul) that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world, *Gal. 6. 14*. Paul's heart is dead to the World; now mark what gave the death wound to his carnal affections. By whom (saith he) the world is crucified to me, and I unto it; that is, Christ and his Cross. There was a time indeed that Paul loved the World as well as who most; but since he hath been acquainted with Christ, and the mercy of God in him to his soul pardoning his sins, and receiving him into favour and fellowship with himself, now he is of another mind, he leaves the World, as *Saul* his seeking of the Asses at the news of a Kingdom; his haunt lies another way now. Let the *Zibacs* of the World take the World, and all they can make of it with their best husbandry. He'll not grutch them their happiness, for as much as his heavenly Lord and King is come in peace to his soul. None can part with the comfort of the creature so cheerfully, as he who hath his mouth at the fountain-head, the love of God himself. Parents are near, and friends are dear, yet a loving Wife can forget her fathers house, and leave her old friends company to go with her Husband, though it be to a Prison; how much more will a gracious soul bid adieu to these, yea, life it self, to go to Christ, especially when he hath sent the Comforter into his bosome, to cheer

cheers him in the solitariness of the way with his sweet company.

4

A fourth suffering grace which the sweet sense this Gospel-peace doth promote, is *Patience*; affliction and suffering to a patient soul are not grievous. Patience is, as one calls it; *πῆλις τῆς ψυχῆς*, The concetive faculty of the soul. That grace which digests all things, and turns them into good nourishment. Meats of hard digestion will not do well with squeamish weak stomachs, and therefore they are dainty and nice in their dyer; whereas men of strong stomachs, they refuse no meat that is set before them; all fare is alike to them. Truly thus there are some things are of very hard digestion to the spirits of men; the peevish, passionate, short-spirited Professor will never concoct reproaches, prison, and death it self, but rather quarrel with his profession, if such fare as these attend the Gospel. *When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by-and by he is offended*, Mat. 13. 21. This will not stay in his stomach, but makes him cast up even that which else he could have kept, (a profession of Christ) might he have had it with a quiet life, and a whole skin. But now the patient soul, he makes his meal of what God in his Providence sets before him; if peace and prosperity be serv'd up with the Gospel, he is thankful, and enjoys the sweetness of the mercy while it lasts; if God takes these away, and instead of them will have him eat the Gospel-feast with soure herbs of affliction and persecution, it shall not make him sick of his cheer. It is but eating the more largely of the comforts of the Gospel with them, and they go down very well wrapt up in them. Indeed the Christian is beholden to those consolations which flow from the peace of the Gospel for his patience. It were impossible for the people of God to endure what sometimes they meet with from men and Devils also, as they do, had they not sweet help from the sense of Gods love in Christ, that lies glowing at their hearts in inward peace and joy. The *Apostle* resolves all the Saints patience, experience and hope, yea, glorying in their tribulations, into this, as the cause of all; *Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost, which is given unto us*, Rom. 5. 5. Sin makes suffering intolerable; when that is gone, the worst part of the trouble is removed; a light cart goes through that slough-easily, where the cart deeply loaden

is set fast; guilt loads the soul, and bemires it in any suffering; take that away, and let God speak peace to his soul, and he that raged before like a mad man under the crosse, shall carry it without winching and whining. *The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds*, Phil. 3. Now what is patience but the keeping of the heart and minde composed and serene in all troubles that befall us? But a word or two for Application.

SECT. III.

First, this informs our judgements in two particulars. First, what to judge of their patience in affliction, that have no interest in the Gospels peace. Secondly, what to think of their peace, who in affliction have no patience at all.

Use. 1.

First; some you shall see very still and quiet in affliction, yet meer strangers to this peace, ignorant of Christ the Peace-maker, walking in opposition to the terms God offers peace in the Gospel upon, and yet very calme in affliction. Certainly all is not right with this poor creature; if he had any sense how it is with him, he would have little patience to see himself under the hand of God, and not know but it may leave him in hell before it hath done with him. When I see one runne over stones and hard way, barefoot and not complain, I do not admire his patience, but pity the poor creature that hath benumbed his feet, and as it were soled them with a brawny dead kinde of flesh, so as to lose his feeling; But save your pity much more for those whose consciences are so benumm'd, and hearts petrified into a senselesse stupidity, that they feele their misery no more than the stone doth the Masons saw which cuts it asunder. Of all men out of hell, none more to be pitied, than he that hangs over the mouth of it, and yet is fearlessse of his danger; while thus the poor wretch is incapable of all means for his good. What good does Physick put into a dead mans mouth? if he cannot be chased to some sense of his condition, all applications are in vain. And if afflictions which are the strongest Physick leave the creature senselesse, there is little hope left that any other will work upon him.

Secondly, what shall we think of those that are great pretenders to this peace, yet cannot think with any patience of suffering from God or for God? certainly so far as the creature is acquainted with this peace, and hath the true sense of Gods love in Christ lying warm at his heart, he cannot but find proportionably his heart stand ready to submit to any suffering that God layes out for him. And therefore it behoves us well to try our peace and comfort. If thou hast no heart to suffer for God, but chooseth a sinne to escape a crosse, thy peace is false; if thou hast but little patience under ordinary afflictions, to compose thy spirit from murmuring, and sustaine thy heart from sinking thy faith on the promise is weak. *If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small,* Prov. 24. 10.

Of. 2.

Secondly, let this stirre thee up, Christian, to be very tender and chary of thy peace with God and thy own conscience. Keep this peace clear and unbroken, and it will keep thy heart whole, when the whole world breaks about thee. So long as this peace of God rules in your hearts, you are safe from fear or danger, though in a prison, at a stake. But if thou sufferest that to be wounded, then thy enemies will come upon thee as *Simen and Levi* on the men of *Sichem* when fore, and be too hard for thee. O'tis sad, (friends) you will finde it so, to go with sore and smarting consciences into a suffering condition. A thorne in the foot will make any way uneasy to the traveller, and guilt in the conscience any condition uncomfortable to the Christian, but most of all a suffering one. Now, if you will keep your peace unbroken, you must bestow some attendance on it, and set as it were a life-guard about it. The choicest flowers need most looking to. The richer the treasure, the safer we lay it. This peace is thy treasure, look well where thou layest it. Two ways our Saviour tells us that worldly treasure, such as silver and gold is, may be lost; *by thieves that break in and carry it away, and by rust that eats and corrupts it,* Mat. 6. 19. There are two ways something like these, wherein the Christian may go by the loss in this his heavenly treasure of inward peace and comfort; presumptuous finnes, these are the thieves that break through and steale the Saints comfort away; when the Christian comes to look into his soul after such a bold act, and thinks to entertain himself (as formerly) with the comforts of his pardoned state, interest in

Christ

Christ, and hopes of heaven through him, alas he finds a sad change; no promise that will give out its consolations to him. The Cellar door is lockt, Christ with-drawn, and the keys carried away with him. He may even cry out with a sad complaint, as *Mary* when she found not Christs body in the Sepulchre, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.* Thus the Christian may with aking heart bemoane his folly; my pride, my uncleannesse, my earthly mindednesse, they have taken away my treasure, rob'd me of my comfort, I could never have comfortable sight of Gods face in any duty or promise since I fell into that foul sinne. And therefore Christian, have a care of such robbers of thy peace as this. *The spirit of man is call'd the candle of the Lord,* Prov. 20. 27. Hath God lighted thy candle (Christian) cheared thy spirit (I mean) with the sense of his love? Take heed of presumptuous finnes; if such a thief be suffered in this thy candle, thy comfort will soone swaile out. Hast thou fallen into the hands of any such presumptuous finnes, that have stolen thy peace from thee? send speedily thy hue and cry after them; I mean, make thy sad moane to God, renew thy repentance out of hand, and raise heaven upon them by a spirit of prayer. This is no time to delay; the further thou lettest these finnes go without repentance, the harder thou wilt finde it to recover thy lost peace and joy out of their hands; and for thy encouragement know, God is ready upon thy serious and solemne return, to restore thee to the joy of his salvation, and do justice upon these enemies of thy soul for thee by his mortifying grace, if thou wilt prosecute the Law upon them closely and vigorously, without relenting towards them, or being bribed with the pleasure, or carnal advantage, that they will not spare to offer, so their lives may be saved.

Again, as presumptuous finnes are the thieves, that with a high hand rob the Christian of his comfort; so sloth and negligence are as the rust, that in time will fret into his comfort, and eat out the heart and strength of it. It is impossible that the Christian who is careless and secure in his walking, infrequent or negligent in his communion with God, should long be owner of much peace or comfort that is true; what if thou doest not pour water of presumptuous finnes into the Lamp of thy joy to quench it? 'tis enough, if thou doest not pour oyl of duty to

seed and maintain it. Thou art a murdherer to thy comfort by starving it as well as by stabbing of it.



VERSE 16.

Above all, taking the shield of faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked.



THE fourth piece in the Christian Panoply, presents it self in this Verse to our consideration. And that is, *The shield of faith*. A grace of graces it is, and here fitly placed in the midst of the other her companions. It stands (methinks) among them as the heart in the midst of the body; or if you please, as *David* when *Samuel* anointed him in the midst of his brethren, 1 Sam. 16. 13. *The Apostle*, when he comes to speak of his grace, he doth as it were, lift up its head, and anoint it above all its fellows. *Above all, take the shield of faith*, and the words easily fall into these two general parts.

1. An exhortation, *above all, take the shield of faith.*

2. A powerful argument pressing the Exhortation, *Whereby ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked.*



CHAP. I.

*The Explication of the words in a four-
fold enquiry.*

IN the Exhortation, these four particulars call for our enquiry towards the Explication of the words.

First, what faith it is, that here is commended to the Christian souldier. *Secondly*, having found the kinde, we are to enquire what this faith is as to its nature. *Thirdly*, why it is compared to a shield, rather than other pieces. *Fourthly*, what is the importance of this ἐν ᾧ πᾶσι, *above all*.

SECT. I.

First, what faith it is that here is commended; This will soon be known, if we consider the cause and end for which it is commended to the Christian; and that is to enable him to *quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*, i.e. of the wicked one the Devil. Now look upon the several kindes of faith; and that among them must be the faith of this place, which enables the creature to quench Satans fiery darts; yea, all his fiery darts. *Historical faith* cannot do this, and therefore is not it; This is so far from quenching Satans fiery darts, that the Devil himself, that shoots them, hath this faith; *James 2. 19. The Devils believed*, *Temporary faith* cannot do it; this is so far from quenching Saints fiery darts, that it self is quenched by them. It makes a goodly blaze of profession, and endures for awhile, *Matth. 13. 21.* but soon disappears; *Miraculous faith*, this falls as short as the former. *Judas's mi-*
raculous

Quest. I.

raculous faith, which he had with other the Apostles (for ought that we can read) enabling him to cast Devils out of others, left himself possessed of the Devil of covetousness, hypocrisie and treason, yea a whole legion of lusts that hurried him down the hill of despair, into the bottomlesse pit of perdition. There is only one kind of faith remains, which is it the Apostle means in this place, and that is *justifying faith*. This indeed is a grace that makes him, whoever hath it, the Devils match. Satan hath not so much advantage of the Christian by the transcendency of his natural abilities, as he hath of Satan in this cause and this his weapon. The Apostle is confident to give the day to the Christian, before the fight is fully over; *ye have overcome the wicked one*, 1 John 2. 13. that is, you are as sure to do it, as if you were now mounted your triumphant chariot in heaven. The Knight shall overcome the Giant, the Saint, Satan; and the same Apostle tells us what gets him the day, 1 John 5. 4. *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

SECT. II.

The second enquiry is, what this justifying faith is?

Quest.

Ans.

I shall answer to this; First, negatively; Secondly, affirmatively.

1. Negatively, in two particulars.

1. Justifying faith is not a naked assent to the truths of the Gospel. This, justifying faith doth give; but this doth not make it justifying faith. A dogmatical faith or historical, is comprehended in justifying faith; but dogmatical faith doth not infer justifying faith. Justifying faith cannot be without a dogmatical; it implies it, as the rational soul in man doth the sensitive. But, the dogmatical may be without the justifying, as the sensitive soul in the beast is without the rational. Judas knew the Scriptures, and without doubt did assent to the truth of them, when he was so zealous a preacher of the Gospel; But he never had so much as one dramme of justifying faith in his soul, John 6. 64. *There are some of you which believe not, for Jesus knew from*

from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who should betray him; yea, Judas's Master, the Devil himself, one far enough (I suppose) from justifying faith, yet he assents to the truth of the Word. He goes against his conscience, when he denies them; when he tempted Christ, he did not dispute against the Scripture, but from the Scripture, drawing his arrows out of this quiver, *Matth. 4. 6.* And at another time, he makes as full a confession of Christ (for the matter) as Peter himself did, *Matth. 8. 22.* compared with *Matth. 16. 17.* Assent to the truth of the Word is but an act of the understanding, which reprobates and Devils may exercise. But justifying faith is a compounded habit, and hath its seat, both in the understanding and will; And therefore called a believing with the heart, *Rom. 10. 10.* yea, a believing with all the heart, *Acts 8. 37.* Philip said, if thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. It takes in all the powers of the soul. There is a double object in the promise; one proper to the understanding, to move that; another proper to the will, to excite and work upon that. As the promise is true, so it calls for an act of an assent from the understanding; and as it is good as well as true, so it calls for an act of the will to embrace and receive it: Therefore he which only notionally knows the promise, and speculatively assents to the truth of it, without clinging to it, and embracing of it, he doth not believe savingly, and can have no more benefit from the promise, than the nourishment from the food he sees and acknowledgeth to be wholesome, but eats none of it.

Secondly, faith is not assurance. If it were, Saint John might have spared his pains, who wrote to them that believed on the Name of the Sonne of God, that they might know that they had eternal life; *1 John 5. 13.* They might then have said, we do this already; what else is your faith, but a believing that we are such as through Christ are pardoned, and shall through him be saved? But this cannot be so: If faith were assurance; then a mans sinnes would be pardoned before he believes, for he must necessarily be pardoned, before he can know he is pardoned. The candle must be lighted, before I can see it is lighted. The child must be born, before I can be assured it is born. The object must be before the act. Assurance is rather the fruit of faith, than faith it self. It is in faith as the flower is in the

root;

root; faith in time, after much communion with God, acquaintance with the Word, and experience of his dealings with the soul, may flourish into assurance; But, as the root truly lives before the flower appears, and continues, when that hath shed its beautiful leaves, and is gone again: so doth true justifying faith live, before assurance comes, and after it disappears. Assurance is as it were the creame of faith; now you know, there is milk, before there is creame; (this riseth not but after some time standing) and there remains milk after it is fiered off. How many (alas) of the precious Saints of God must we shut out from being believers, if no faith, but what amounts to assurance? We must needs offend against the generation of Gods children, among whom, some are babes, not yet come to the use of their reflect act of faith, so as to own the grace of God in them to be true, upon the review that they take of their own actings; And must not the child be allowed to be a child, till he can speak for himself, and say he is so? Others there are in Christs family, who are of higher stature, and greater experience in the wayes of God; yet have lost those apprehensions of pardoning mercy, which once they were (through the goodness of God) able to have shewen; shall we say their faith went away in the departure of their assurance? how oft then in a year may a believer be no believer? even as oft as God with-draws and leaves the creature in the dark. Assurance is like the Sun-flower, which opens with the day, and shuts with the night. It follows the motion of Gods face; if that looks smilingly on the soul, it lives; if that frowns or hides it self, it dies. But faith is a plant that can grow in the shade, a grace that can finde the way to heaven in a dark night. It can walk in darknesse, and yet trust in the Name of the Lord, Isa. 50. 10. In a word, by making the essence of faith to lie in assurance, we should not only offend against the generation of Gods children, but against the God and Father of these children; for at one clap we turn the greater number of those children he hath here on earth out of doors, ye we are cruel to those that he is most tender of, and make sad the hearts of those that he would have chiefly comforted. Indeed if this were true, a great part of Gospel provision laid up in the promises, is of little use; we read of promises in those that mourn, *they shall be comforted*; to the contrite, *they shall be revived*; to him that walks
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in darkness, *Isa. 50.* and the like; these belong to Believers, and none else; surely then there are some Believers that are in the dark, under the hatches of sorrow, wounded and broken with their sins, and temptation for them; but they are not such as are assured of the love of God, their water is turned into joy, their night into light, their sighs and sobs into joy and praise.

Secondly, I shall answer affirmatively, what justifying faith is; and in the description of it, I shall consider it solely as justifying. And so take it in these few words, It is that act of the soul, whereby it rests on Christ crucified for pardon and life, and that upon the warrant of the promise. In the description observe,

1. The subject where faith is seated, not any single faculty, but the soul; Of this I have spoke something before.

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2. Here is the object of faith as justifying, and that is Christ crucified. The whole truth of God is the object of justifying faith, it trades with the whole Word of God, and doth firmly assent unto it; but in its justifying act, it singles out Christ crucified for its object. First, The person of Christ is the object of faith as justifying. Secondly, Christ as crucified.

2.

First, The person of Christ, not any axiome or proposition in the Word; This is the object of assurance, not of faith. Assurance faith; I believe my sins are pardoned through Christ; Faiths language is, I believe on Christ for the pardon of them. The Word of God doth direct our faith to Christ, and terminates it upon him; called therefore, *a coming to Christ*, *Matth. 11. 28.* *a receiving of him*, *John 1. 12.* *a believing on him*, *John 17. 20.* The promise is but the dish, in which Christ the true food of the soul is served up; and if faiths hand be on the promise, it is but as one that draws the dish to him, that he may come at the dairies in it. The promise is the marriage-ring on the hand of faith; now we are not married to the ring, but with it unto Christ. *All promises*, saith the Apostle, *are Yea and Amen in him.*— They have their excellency from him, and efficacy in him. I mean in a souls union to him. To run away with a promise, and not to close with Christ, and by faith become one in him, is, as if a man should rend a branch from a Tree, and lay it up in his

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Chest, expecting it to bear fruit there. Promises are dead branches severed from Christ: But when a soul by faith becomes united to Christ, then he partakes of all his fatness; nor a promise but yields sweetness to it.

Secondly, As Christ is the primary object of faith, so Christ as crucified. Not Christ in his personal excellencies; so he is the object rather of our love than faith; but as bleeding, and that to death under the hand of divine justice for to make an atonement by Gods own appointment for the sins of the World. As the Handmaids eye is to her Mistresses hand for direction, so faiths eye is on Gods revealing himself in his Word; which way God by it points the soul, thither it goes. Now there faith finds God intending to save poor sinners pitcht on Christ, and Christ alone for the transacting and effecting of it, and him whom God chooseth to trust with the work, him and him alone will faith choose to lay the burden of her confidence on.

Again, Faith observes how Christ performed this great work, and accordingly how the promise holds him forth to be applied for pardon and salvation. Now faith finds, that then Christ made the full payment to the justice of God for sin; when he poured out his blood to death upon the Cross; all the precedaneous acts of his Humiliation, were but preparatory to this. He was born to dye, he was sent into the World as a Lamb bound with the bonds of an irreversible Decree for a sacrifice. Christ himself when he came into the World, understood this to be the errand he was sent on, *Heb. 10. 5. When he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and burning offering thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast prepared me, i. e. to be an expiatory Sacrifice; without this, all he had done, would have been labour undone. No redemption, but by his blood, Ephes. 1. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins. No Church without his blood, Acts 20. 28. The Church of God, which he hath purchased with his blood; Elatere Christi morientis extirpis Ecclesiæ. The Church is taken out of dying Jesus his side, as Eve out of sleeping Adams. Christ did not redeem and save poor souls, by sitting in Majesty on his heavenly Throne, but by hanging on the shameful Crosse, under the tormenting hand of mans fury, and Gods just wrath. And therefore the poor soul, that would have pardon of sin, is directed to place his faith not only on Christ, but*
on

on bleeding Christ, *Rom. 3. 25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.*

3. The act of faith upon this object, and that is resting on Christ crucified for pardon and life. I know there are many acts of the soul antecedent to this, without which the creature can never truly exercise this. As knowledge, especially of God and Christ, upon whose authority and testimony it relies, *I know whom I have believed, 2 Tim. I. 12.* None will readily trust a stranger, that he is wholly unacquainted with. *Abraham* went indeed he knew not whither, but he did not go with he knew not who. The great thing that God laboured to instruct *Abraham* in, and satisfy him with, was the knowledge of his own glorious self, who he was, that he might take his word, and rely on it, how harsh and improbable, yea, impossible soever it might sound in sense or reason's ear, *I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect.* Secondly, Assent to the truth of the Word of God; if this foundation-stone be not laid, faith's building cannot go on. Who will trust him, that he dares not think speaks true? Thirdly, A sense of our own vileness and emptiness. By the one to see our demerit, what we deserve, Hell and damnation; By the other our own impotency, how little we can contribute, yea, just nothing to our own reconciliation; I joyn them together, because the one ariseth out of the other; sense of this emptiness comes from the deep apprehensions a soul hath of the others fullness in him; you never knew a man full of self-confidence, and self-abasement together. The conscience cannot abound with the sense of sin, and the heart with self-conceit at the same time. *When the Commandment came, sin revived, and I dyed, Rom. 7. 9.* That is, when the Commandment came in the accusations of it to his conscience; sin, that like a sleepy Lyon had liew still, and he secure and confident by it, when that began to roar in his conscience, then he dyed, that is, his vain-confidence of himself gave up the ghost. Both these are necessary to faith; sense of sin, like the smart of a wound, to make the creature think of a plaister to cure it; and sense of emptiness and insufficiency in himself or any creature to do the cure, necessary to make him go out to Christ for cure. We do not go abroad to beg what we have of our own within doors. These (with some other) are necessary to faith; but the receiving of Christ, and resting on Christ, is

that act of faith to which justification is promised, *John 3. 18.* *He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.* Now every one that assents to the truth of what the Scripture saith of Christ, doth not believe on Christ. No, this believing on Christ implies an union of the soul to Christ, and fiduciary recumbency on Christ. Therefore we are bid to take hold of Christ, *Isa. 27. 5.* *(who is there called Gods strength, as elsewhere his arm) that we may make peace with God, and we shall make peace with him;* It is not the sight of a mans arm stretched out to a man in the water will save him from drowning, but the taking hold of it. Christ is a stone, faith builds upon Christ for salvation; and how, but by laying its whole weight and expectation of mercy on him? what *Paul*, *2 Tim. 1. 12.* calls *believing* in the former part of the verse, he calls in the latter part *a committing to him* *sols kept against that day.*

4. The fourth and last branch in the description, is the warrant and security that faith goes upon in this act. And this it takes from the promise; indeed there is no way, how God can be conceived to contract a debt to his creature, but by promise. There are wayes for men to become debtors one to another, though never any promise pass from them. The father is a debtor to his child, and owes him love, provision and nurture. The child a debtor to his parent, and owes him honour and obedience, though neither of them promised this to each other. Much more do h the creature stand deep in Gods debt-book, and owes himself with all he hath to God his Maker, though he hath not the grace voluntarily to make these over to God by promise and Covenant. But the great God is so absolute a Sovereign, that none can make a law to bind him but himself; till he be pleased to pass an act of grace, of his own good-will, to give this, or do that good thing, to and for his poor creatures; no claim can be laid to the least mercy at his hands. There are two things therefore that are greatly to be heeded by the soul that would believe.

First, He must enquire for a promise to bear his faith out, and warrant him to expect such a mercy at Gods hand. And then secondly, when he hath found a promise, and observed the terms well

well on which it runs, not to stay for any further encouragement, but upon the credit of the naked promise to set his faith on work.

First, To enquire out a promise, and observe well the terms on which it runs; indeed upon the point it comes all to one, to believe without a promise, or to believe on a promise, but not observe the terms of it. Both are presumptuous, and speed alike. A Prince hath as much reason to be angry with him, that doth not keep close to his commission, as with another, that acts without any commission. O how little considered is this by many? who make bold of Gods arm to lean on for pardon and salvation, but never think, that the promise which presents Christ to be leaned on as a Saviour, presents him at the same time to be chosen as a Lord and Prince; such were the rebellious *Israelites*, who durst make God and his promise a leaning-stock for their soul elbows to rest on; *They call themselves of the holy City, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel, Isa. 48. 2.* But they were more bold than welcome. God rejected their confidence, and loathed their sauciness. Though a Prince would not disdain to let a poor wounded man (faint with bleeding, and unable to go alone) upon his humble request, make use of his arm, rather than he should perish in the streets; yet he would with indignation reject the same motion from a filthy Drunkard that is besmeared with his vomit; if he should desire leave to lean on him, because he cannot go alone. I am sure, how welcome soever the poor humble soul (that lies bleeding for his sins at the very mouth of Hell in his own thoughts) is to God, when he comes upon the encouragement of the promise to lean on Christ; yet the profane wretch that emboldens himself to come to Christ, shall be kickt away with infinite disdain and abhorrency by a holy God, for abusing his promise.

Secondly, When a poor sinner hath found a promise, and observes the terms with a heart willing to embrace them, now he is to put forth an act of faith upon the credit of the naked promise, without staying for any other encouragement elsewhere. Faith is a right pilgrim-grace; it travels with us to Heaven, and when it sees us safe got within our Fathers doors (Heaven I mean) it takes leave of us. Now the promise is this pilgrims staffe, with which it sets forth, though (like *Jacob* on his way to *Padan-Aram*) it hath nothing else with it. Remember thy word unto thy

servant

servant (saith David) upon which thou hast caused me to hope, *Psalm* 119. 49. The word of promise was all he had to shew; and he count that enough to set his faith on work. But alas, some make comfort the ground of faith, and experience their warrant to believe. They will believe when God manifests himself to them, and sends in some sensible demonstration of his love to their souls; but till this be done, the promise hath little authority to silence their unbelieving cavils, and quiet their misgiving hearts into a waiting on God for the performance of what there is spoke from Gods own mouth. Like old *Jacob*, who gave no credit to his children, when they told him *Joseph* was yet alive, and Governor over all the land of *Egypt*. This news was too good and great to enter into his belief, who had given him for dead so long; It is said, *His heart fainted, for he believed them not*, *Gen.* 25. 6. But when he saw the Waggon that *Joseph* had sent to carry him thither, then 'tis said, *The spirit of Jacob revived*, ver. 27. Truly thus, though the promise tells the poor humbled sinner, Christ is alive, Governor of Heaven it self, with all power there and on earth put into his hand, that he may give eternal life unto all that believe on him; and he be therefore exhorted to rest upon Christ in the promise, yet his heart faints and believes not; 'tis the Waggon he would fain see, some sensible expressions of Gods love that he listens after; if he did but know that he was an Elect person, or were one that God did love, then he would believe. But God hath little reason to thank him in the mean time for suspending his faith till these come. This is as I may so say, to believe, for spiritual loves, and is rather sense than faith.

SECT. III.

Quest.
Ans.

Quest. 3. Why is faith compared to a shield?

Ans. For a double resemblance, that is between this grace, and that piece of Armör.

First. The shield is not for the defence of any particular part of the body, as almost all the other pieces are, Helmet fitted for the head, Plate designed for the breast, and so others, they have

have their several parts, which they are fastened to. But the shield is a piece, that is intended for the defence of the whole body. It was used therefore to be made very large, for its broadness called *Suqas* of *Shoa*, a gate or door, because so long and large, as in a manner to cover the whole body. To which that place alludes, *Psal.* 5. 12. *Thou Lord wilt bless the righteous, with favour thou wilt compass him as with a shield.* And if the shield were not large enough at once to cover every part, yet being a movable piece of Armor, the skilful Souldier might turn it this way or that way, to catch the blow, or Arrow from lighting on any part they were directed to. And this indeed doth excellently well set forth the universal use that faith is of to the Christian. It defends the whole man; every part of the Christian by it is preserv'd. Sometimes the temptation is level'd at his head; Satan he will be disputing against this truth and that, to make the Christian, if he can, call them into question, meerly because his reason & understanding cannot comprehend them; and he prevails with some that do not think themselves the unwise in the world, upon this very account, to blot the Deity of Christ, with other mysterious truths of the Gospel, quite out of their Creed. Now faith interposeth between the Christian and this arrow. It comes into the relief of the Christians weak understanding as seasonably, as *Zeruah* did to *David*, when the *Giant Ishbi-benob*, thought to have slain him. I'll trust the Word of God faith the Believer, rather than my own pur-blind reason. *Abraham* not being weak in faith, consider'd not his own body now dead, *Rom.* 4. 19. If sense should have had the hearing of that business; yea, if that holy man had put it to a reference between sense and reason also, what resolution his thoughts should come to concerning this strange message that was brought him, he would have been in danger of calling the truth of it in question, though God himself was the messenger: But faith brought him honourably off.

Again, Is it Conscience that the Tempter assaults? (And it is not seldom that he is shooting his fiery darts of horror and terror at this mark) faith receives the shock, and saves the creature harmless. *I had fainted unless I had believed* (saith *David*) *Psal.* 27. 13. He means when false Witnesses rose up against him, and such as breathed out cruelty, as appears, *ver.* 12. faith

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was his best fence against mans charge, and so it is against Satans and consciences also. Never was man in a sadder condition, than the poor Jaylor, *Acts 16.* much ado he had to keep his own hands from offering violence to himself; who that had seen him fall trembling at *Paul* and *Silas* feet, with that sad question in his mouth, *Sirs, What must I do to be saved?* ver. 30. Could have thought this deep wound that was now given his Conscience, would so soon have been closed and cured? as we find it, *ver. 34.* The earth-quake of horror that did so dreadfully shake his Conscience is gone, and his trembling turn'd into rejoycing; now mark what made this blessed calm, *Believe (saith Paul) on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved,* ver. 31. And *ver. 34.* it is said, *he rejoyced, believing in God with his whole house.* It is faith stills the storm which sin had raised; faith that chang'd his doleful note into joy and gladness. Happy man he was, that had such skilful Chyrurgions so near him, who could direct him the nearest way to a cure.

Again, Is it the Will that the temptation is laid to catch? some commands of God cannot be obeyed without much self-denial, because they cross us in that, which our own wills are carried forth very strongly to desire; so that we must deny our will, before we can do the Will of God. Now a temptation comes very forcible, when it runs with the Tyde of our own wills. What, saith Satan, wilt thou serve a God that thus thwarts thee in every thing? If thou lovest any thing more than other, presently he must have that from thee; no lamb in all the flock will serve for a Sacrifice, but *Isaac, Abrahams* only child, he must be offered up. No place will content God, that *Abraham* should serve him in, but where he must live in banishment from his dear Relations and acquaintance; Wilt thou, saith Satan, yield to such hard terms as these? Now faith is the grace that doth the soul admirable service at such a pinch as this: It is able to appease the tumult, which such a temptation may raise in the soul, and dismiss the rout of all mutinous thoughts, yea, to keep the King of Heavens peace so sweetly in the Christians bosom, that such a temptation, if it comes, shall find few or none to declare for it. *Heb. 11. 8.* By faith (it is said) *Abraham obeyed, and went out not knowing whither.* And we do not read of one fond look that his heart cast back upon his dear native Countrey, as he went from it,

so well-pleased had faith made him with his journey. It was hard work for *Moses* to strip himself of the Magistrates robes, and put his hands on his servants head; hard to leave another to enter upon his labours, and reap the honour of lodging the *Israelites* colours in *Canaan*, after it had cost him so many a weary step to bring them within sight of it, yet faith made him willing. He saw better robes that he should put on in heaven, than those he was called to put off on earth. The lowest place in glory is beyond all compare, greater preferment, than the highest place of honour here below; to stand before the Throne there, and minister to God in immediate service, than to sit in a Throne on earth and have all the world waiting at his foot.

Secondly; the shield doth not only defend the whole body, but is a defence to the soldiers Armour also. It keeps the arrow from the helmet as well as head, from the breast and breast-plate also. Thus faith it is Armour upon Armour, a grace that preserves all the other graces. But of this more hereafter.

SECT. IV.

Quest. 4. What doth this ἐν παντι (above all) import.

Ans. There is variety among Interpreters about it. *Jerome* reads it, in omnibus, sumentes sententiam fidei. In all things taking the shield of faith, i.e. In all duties, enterprizes, temptations or afflictions; whatever you are called to do or suffer, take faith. Indeed faith to the Christian, is like fire to the Chymist, nothing can be done without it Christianly. Without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11, 6. And how can the Christian please himself in that wherein he doth not please his God? others read it; over all take the shield of faith, i.e. Take it over all your graces, as that which will cover them. All other graces have their safety from Earth, they lie secure under the shadow of faith, as an Army lies safe under the protection and command of a strong Castle planted round with Cannon. But we shall follow our translation being most comprehensive, and that which will take these within its compass. Above all take, &c. that is, among all the pieces of Armour which you are to provide, and wear for your

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Quest. 4.
Ans.

defence, let this have the preheminance of your care to get, and having got, to keep it. Now that the Apostle meant to give a preheminance to faith above other graces, appears; First by the piece of Armour he compares it to; *the shield*, which of old was prized above all other pieces by souldiers. They counted it greater shame to lose their shield, than to lose the field, and therefore when under the very foot of their enemy, they would not part with it, but esteemed it an honour to dye with their shield in their hand. It was the charge that one laid upon her son, going into the wars, when she gave him a shield, *That he should either bring his shield home with him, or he be brought home upon his shield*; she had rather see him dead with it, than come home alive without it. Secondly, by the noble effect which is here ascribed to faith; *By which ye shall quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*. The other pieces are nakedly commended, Take the girdle of truth, breastplate of righteousness, and so the rest, but nothing singly ascribed to any of them, what they can do, but when he speaks of faith, he ascribes the whole victory to it. This quencheh all the fiery darts of the wicked. And why thus? are the other graces of no use, and doth faith do all? what need then the Christian load himself with more than this one piece? I answer, every piece hath its necessary use in the Christians warfare; not any one part of the whole suit can be spared in the day of battel, but the reason (I humbly conceive) why no particular effect is annex't severally to each of these, but all ascribed to faith, is to let us know, that all these graces, their efficacy, and our benefit from them, is in their conjunction with faith, and influence they receive from faith, so that this is plainly the design of the Spirit of God to give faith the precedency in our care above the rest; only take heed that you do not fancy any indifference or negligence to be allowed you in your endeavours after the other graces, because you are more strongly provoked and excited up to the getting and keeping this. The Apostle would inread your care here, but not remit it there; cannot we bid a souldier above all parts of his body to beware of a wound at his heart, but he must needs think presently he need take no care to guard his head? truly such a one would deserve a crack't crown to cure him of his folly. The words thus opened, we shall content our selves with one general observation from them, and 'tis this,

CHAP. II.

Sheweth the preheminance of faith above other
graces in four particulars.

THat faith of all graces is the chief, and chiefly to be laboured for. There is a precedency or preheminance peculiar to this above all other. It is among graces, as the *Sun* is among the *Planets*; or as *Solomon's vertuous woman* among the daughters, Prov. 31. 29. Though every grace hath done vertuously, yet thou O faith excellest them all. The Apostle indeed gives the precedency to love, and sets faith on the lower hand, 1 Cor. 13. 13. *Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest is charity*; yet you may observe; that this prelation of it before faith, hath a particular respect to the Saints blisseful state in heaven; where love remains, and faith ceaseth; in which regard, love indeed is the greater, because it is the end of our faith; we apprehend by faith, that we may enjoy by love; but if we consider the Christians present state, while militant on earth, in this respect love must give place to faith; 'tis true, love is the grace that shall triumph in heaven; but it is faith, not love, which is the conquering grace on earth. *This is the victory that overcometh the world; even our faith*, 1 Joh. 5. 4. love indeed hath its place in the battel, and doth excellent service, but it is under faith its leader, Gal. 5. 6. *faith which worketh by love*; even as the Captain fighteth by his souldiers, whom he leads on; so faith works by love which it excites. Love ('tis true) is the grace that at last possesseth the inheritance, but it is faith that gives the Christian right unto it, without which he should never have enjoyed

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it. *John 1. 12.* To as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name. In a word, it is love that unites God and glorified Saints together in heaven; but it was faith that first united them to Christ; while they were on earth, *Eph. 3. 17.* that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. And if Christ had not dwelt in them by faith on earth, they should never have dwelt with God in heaven. But I proceed to shew wherein it appears, that faith hath such a prelation above other graces, which take in these following particulars.

SECT. I.

1. First, in the great enquiry that God makes after faith above all other graces. Nothing more speaks our esteem of persons or things, than our enquiry after them. We ask first and most for those that stand highest in our thoughts. *Is your father well* (said Joseph) *the old man of whom ye spake, is he alive?* Gen. 43. 27. No doubt there were others of whose welfare Joseph would have been glad to hear of also, but being most pent and pained with a natural affection to his father, he eases himself of this first. And when David ask't for Absalom above all others; *Is the young man Absalom safe?* and over again with it to Cush, 2 Sam. 18. it was easie to guesse how highly he valued his life. Now you shall finde the great enquiry that God makes is for faith. *When the Son of man cometh, shall he finde faith on the earth?* Luke 18. 8. Implying, that this is the grace which he will especially look for, and desires to finde. We read, *John 9.* of a great miracle, a man by Christ restored to his sight, that was born blind. This so enraged the malicious Pharisees, that they excommunicate the poor man for no other fault, but giving his merciful Physician a good word. This brings Christ the sooner to him, so tender is he of those that suffer for him, that they shall not long want his sweet company, and he hath no cause to complain for being cast out of mans society, that gains Christs presence by the same. Now observe what Christ saith to him at his first meeting, v. 35. *Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when he had found*

found him, he said unto him, dost thou believe on the Son of God? The man had already exprest some zeal for Christ, in vindicating him, and speaking well of him to the head of the bitterest enemies he had on earth, for which he was now a sufferer at their hands. This was very commendable; but there is one thing that Christ prizeth above all this, and that is faith. This he enquires after, *dost thou believe on the Son of God?* As if he had said, all this thy zeal in speaking for me, and patience in suffering are nothing worth in my account, except thou hast faith also. Indeed most of Gods dealings with his people, what are they, but enquiries after faith, either the truth or strength of it? when he afflicts them, it is for the trial of their faith, 1 Pet. 1. 7. Afflictions they are Gods Spade and Mattock, by which he digs into his peoples hearts to find out this gold of faith; not, but that he enquires for other graces also; but this is named for all, as the chief, which found, all the other will soon appear. When God seems to delay and makes (as it were) a halt in his providence, before he comes with the mercy he promiseth, and we pray for, 'tis exploratory to faith. *O woman great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* Mat. 15. 28. She had received her answer without so much ado; only Christ had a mercy in store for her more than she thought of; with the granting of her suit in the cure of her daughter, he had a minde to give her the evidence of her faith also, and the high esteem God hath of his grace, as that which may have of him what it will.

SECT. II.

The commendations that are given to faith above other graces, you shall observe that in the same action, wherein other graces are eminently exercised as well as faith, even then faith is taken notice of, and the crown set upon faiths head, rather than any of the other. We hear nothing almost of any other grace throughout the whole eleventh of the Hebrews, but faith; by faith Abraham, by faith Jacob, and the rest of those worthies did all those famous exploits. There was a concurrence of the other graces with faith in them all. But all goes under the name of faith.

The

The whole Army fight, yet the *General* or *Captain* hath the honour of the victory ascribed to him. *Alexanders* and *Casars* names are transmitted to posterity as the great conquerors, that over-came so many battels, not the private souldiers that fought under them. Faith is the captain-grace; all those famous acts of those Saints are recorded as the achievements of faith. Thus concerning the Centurion, *Mat. 8. 10. Verily* (saith Christ) *I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.* There were other graces very eminent in the Centurion besides his faith; his conscientious care of his poor servant, for whom he could have done no more, if he had been his own childe; there are some that call themselves Christians, yet would not have troubled themselves so much for a sick servant; such alas are oft lesse regarded in sicknesse, than their Masters beast. But especially his humility, this shined forth very eminently, in that self-abasing expression, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou should'st come under my roof,* v. 8. Consider but his calling and degree therein, and it makes his humility more conspicuous. A Sword-man, yea, a Commander; such use to speak big and high. Power is seldome a friend to humility, surely he was a man of a rare humble spirit, that he, whose mouth was used so much to words of command over his souldiers, could so dimit and humble himself in his addresse to Christ; yet his faith out-shines his humility in its greatest strength. Nor, I have not found such humility; but such faith in all *Israel*. As if Christ had said, there is not one believer in all *Israel*, but I know him, and how rich he is in faith also; but I have not found so much of this heavenly treasure in any ones hand, as in this *Centurions*. Indeed the Christians chief riches is in faiths hand. *Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?* Jam. 2. 5. Why rich in faith, rather than rich in patience, rich in love, or any other grace? O great reason for it; when the creature comes to lay claim to pardon of sin, the favour of God, and heaven it self, it is not love, patience, &c. but faith alone that lays down the price of all these. Not Lord pardon, save me, here is my love and patience for it: but here is Christ, and the price of his blood, which faith presents thee for the full purchase of them all; and this leads to a third, and indeed the chief of all.

SECT. III.

3.

Thirdly, the high office that faith is set in above other graces, in the business of our justification before God. *Bring justifi'd by faith we have peace with God, Rom. 5. 1.* Not justified by love, repentance, patience, or any other grace beside faith. O how harsh doth it sound in Christians ear, justifying patience, justifying repentance? and if they were concern'd in the act of justification, as faith is, the name would as well become them, as it doth faith it self. But we find this appropriated to faith, and the rest hedg'd out from having to do in the act of justification, though included and supposed in the person who is justified. It is faith that justifies without works. This is *Paul's* task to prove, *Rom. 3.* But this faith which justifies, is not dead or idle, but a lively working faith which seems to be *James's* design, *ch. 2.* of his *Epistle*. As God did single Christ out from all others, to be the only Mediator betwixt him and man, and his righteousness to be the meritorious cause of our justification, so he hath singled faith out from all the other graces, to be the instrument or means for appropriating this righteousness of Christ to our selves. Therefore as this righteousness is called *the righteousness of God*, and opposed to our own righteousness (though wrought by God in us) *Rom. 10. 3.* because it is wrought by Christ for us, but not inherent in us as the other is. So also it is called *the righteousness of faith*, *Rom. 4. 11, 13.* Not the righteousness of repentance, love or any other grace. Now wherefore is it called the righteousness of faith and not of love, repentance, &c? Surely, not that faith it self is our righteousness; then we should be justified by works, while we are justified by faith, contrary to the Apostle, who opposeth faith and works, *Rom. 4.*

In a word, then we should be justified by a righteousness of our own, for faith is a grace inherent in us, and as much our own work, as any grace besides is. But this is as contrary to the same Apostles doctrine, *Phil. 3. 9.* where our own righteousness, and the righteousness which is by faith are declared to be inconsistent. It can therefore be called the righteousness of faith for this reason and no other; because faith is the only grace whose office it

is to lay hold on Christ, and so to appropriate his righteousness for justification to our souls. Christ and faith are relatives, which must not be sever'd. Christ he is the treasure, and faith the hand which receives it. Christs righteousness is the robe, faith the hand that puts it on; so that it is Christ who is the treasure, by his blood he dischargeth our debt, and not faith; whose office is only to receive Christ, whereby he becomes ours. It is Christs righteousness that is the robe which covers our nakedness, and makes us beautiful in Gods eye, only faith hath the honour to put the robe on the soul; and it is no small honour that is therein put upon faith above other graces. As God grac'd Moses exceedingly above the rest of his brethren (the *Israelites*) when he was called up the Mount to receive the Law from Gods mouth; while they had their bounds set them, to stand waiting at the bottom of the hill, till he brought it down to them; so doth God highly honour faith, to call this up as the grace, by whose hand he will convey this glorious priviledge of justification over to us.

Quest.

Quest. But why is faith rather than any grace else employed in this act?

Ans. 1.

Ans. 1. Because there is no grace hath so proper a fitnessse for this office as faith. Why hath God appointed the eye to see, and not the ear? why the hand to take our food, rather than the foot? It is easily answered, because these members have a particular fitnessse for these functions, and not the other. Thus faith hath a fitnessse for this work peculiar to itself; we are justified not by giving any thing to God what we do, but by receiving from God what Christ hath done for us. Now faith is the only receiving grace, and therefore only fit for this office.

2.

2. There is no grace that God could trust his honour so safely with in this businesse of justification, as with faith. The great design God hath in justifying a poor sinner, is to magnifie his free mercy in the eye of his creature, this is writ in such fair characters in the Word, that he which runs may read it. God was resolv'd that his free mercy should go away with all the honour, and the creature should be quite cut out from any pretensions to partnership with him therein. Now no way like to this of being justified by faith, for the securing and safe-guarding the

the glory of Gods free grace, *Rom 3. 25, 26.* When the Apostle hath in some *verses* together discoursed of the free justification of a sinner before God, he goes on to shew how this cuts the very comb, yea, throat of all self-exalting thoughts, *ver. 27. Where is boasting then? it is excluded: By what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith.* Princes of all wrongs, most disdain and abhor, to see their Royal Bed defiled; so jealous they have been of this, that for the prevention of all suspicion of such a foul fact, it hath been of old the custom of the greatest *Monarchs*, that those who were their Favourites, and admitted into nearest attendance upon their own persons & *Queens*, should be *Eunuchs*; such whose very disability of nature, might remove all suspicion of any such attempt by them. Truly God is more jealous of having the glory of his grace ravish'd by the pride, and self-glorying of the creature, than ever any Prince was of having his *Queen* deflowered. And therefore to secure it from any such horrid abuse, he hath chosen faith, this *Eunuch-grace* (as I may so call it) to stand so nigh him, and be employ'd by him in this high act of grace, whose very nature (being a self-emptying grace) renders it incapable of entering into any such design against the glory of Gods grace; faith hath two hands; with one it pulls off its own Righteousness, and throws it away, as *David* did *Sauls Armour*; with the other it puts on Christs Righteousness over the souls shame, as that in which it dares alone see God, or be seen of him. This makes it impossible (faith learned and holy *Master Ball*) how to conceive that faith and works should be conjoin'd as co-causes in justification; seeing the one, that is faith, attributes all to the free grace of God; the other, that is works, challenge it themselves: The one (that is faith) will ascribe no higher, but to be the instrumental cause of free remission; the other can sit no lower, but to be the matter of justification, if any cause at all; for if works be accounted to us in the room, or place of exact obedience in free justification, do they not supply the place? are they not advanced to the dignity of works complete and perfect in justification from justice? *Treatise of Covenant of grace, pag. 70.*

SECT. IV.

4. Fourthly, The mighty influence, yea, universal, that faith hath upon all her sister-graces, speaks her the chief of them all. What makes the Sun so glorious a creature, but because it is a common good, and serves all the lower World with light and influence? faith is a grace, whose Ministry God useth as much for the good of the spiritual World in the Saints (called in Scripture the *Κοινὴ κτίσις*, the *new Creation*, Gal. 6. 15.) as he doth the Sun for the corporeal. *Nothing is hid from the heat of the Sun*, Psal. 19. 6. And no grace that faiths influence reacheth not unto.

I. First, Faith finds all the graces with work. As the rich Tradesman gives out his wool, some to this man, and some to that, who all spin and work of the stock he gives them out, so that when he ceaseth to trade, they must also, because they have no stock but what he affords them. Thus faith gives out to every grace, what they act upon. If faith trades nor, neither can they. To instance in one or two graces for all the rest. Repentance, this is a sweet grace, but set on work by faith. *Ninevehs Repentance* is attributed unto their faith; *Jonah 3. 5. The people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sack-cloth.* It is very like indeed that their Repentance was no more than legal, but it was as good as their faith was; if their faith had been better, so would their Repentance also. All is whiff and quier in an unbelieving soul; no news of Repentance, nor noise of any complaint made against sin, till faith begins to stir. When faith presents the threatening, and binds the truth and terror of it to the Conscience, then the sinner hath something to work upon. As light actuates colours, and brings the eye acquainted with its object, whereupon it falls to work, so doth faith actuate sin in the Conscience; Now musing thoughts will soon rise, and like clouds, thicken apace into a storm, till they bespread the soul with an universal blackness of horror and trembling for sin. But then also the creature is at a loss, and can go no further in the business of Repentance, till faith sends in more work from the promise, by presenting a pardon therein, to the returning soul;

Soul ; which no sooner is heard and believed by the creature, but the work of Repentance goes on apace. Now the cloud of horror and terror, which the fear of wrath (from consideration of the threatening) had gather'd in the Conscience, dissolves into a soft rain of Evangelical sorrow, at the Report which faith makes from the promise.

Love is another heavenly grace: But faith gathers the fuel that makes this fire ; speak Christian, whose soul now flames with love to God, was it alwayes thus ? no sure, there was a time (I dare say for thee) when thy Hearth was cold, not a spark of this fire to be found on the Altar of thy heart. How is it then Christian, that now thy soul loves God, whom before thou didst scorn and hate ? surely thou hast heard some good News from Heaven, that hath chang'd thy thoughts of God, and turn'd the stream of thy love which ran another way, into this happy Channel. And who can be the messenger besides faith, that brings any good News from Heaven to the soul ? It is faith that proclaims the promise, opens Christs excellencies, pours out his Name, for which the Virgins love him ; when faith hath drawn a Character of Christ out of the Word, and presented him in his love and loveliness to the soul, now the creature is sweetly inveigled in his affections to him ; now the Christian hath a copious Theam to enlarge upon in his thoughts, whereby to endear Christ more and more unto him. *Unto him that believes, he is precious*, 1 Pet. 1. 7. And the more faith, the more precious. If we should sit in the same Room by the dearest friend we had in all the World, and our eyes were held from seeing him, we would take no more notice of him, & give no more respect to him, than to a meer stranger ; But if one should come and whisper us in the ear, & tell us this is such a dear friend of yours, that once laid down his life to save yours, that hath made you Heirs to all the goodly Estate that he hath, will you not shew your Respect to him ? O how our hearts would work in our breasts, and make haste to come forth in some passionate expression of our dear affection to him ? yea, how heartily ashamed would we be for our uncivil and unbecoming behavior towards him, though occasioned by our ignorance of him ? Truly thus it is here ; so long as faiths eye hath a mist before it, or is unactive, and as it were asleep in the dull Habir, the Christian may sit very nigh Christ in an Ordinance,

in a providence, and be very little affected with him, and drawn out in loves to him. But when faith is awake to see him as he passeth by in his love and loveliness, and active to make report to the soul of the sweet excellencies it sees in Christ, as also of his dear bleeding love to his soul; the Christians love now cannot choose but spring and leap in his bosom at the voice of faith, as the Babe did in *Elizabeths* womb at the salutation of her cousin *Mary*.

2.

Secondly, As faith sets the other graces on work, by actuating their objects, about which they are conversant; so faith helps them all to work by fetching strength from Christ to act and reinforce them; faith is not only the instrument to receive the Righteousness of Christ for our Justification; But also it is the great instrument to receive grace from Christ for our sanctification; *Of his fulness we receive grace for grace*, *Joh. 1. 16*. But how do we receive it? even by faith; faith unites the soul to Christ; and as by a pipe laid close to the mouth of a fountain, water is carried to our Houses for the supply of the whole family; so by faith, is derived to the soul supply in abundance, for the particular offices of all the several graces. *He that believeth, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters*, *Joh. 7. 38*. That is, he that hath faith, and is careful to live in the exercise of it, shall have a flow and an encrease of all other graces, called here *living waters*. Hence it is, that the Saints, when they would advance to a high pitch in other graces, they pray for the encrease of their faith. Our Saviour, *Luke 17. 3, 4*. sets his Apostles a very hard Lesson, when he would wind up their love to such a high pitch, as to forgive their offending brother seven times in a day; Now mark, *ver. 5*. *The Apostles* (apprehending the difficulty of the duty) *said unto the Lord, Encrease our faith*. But why did they not rather say, encrease our love, seeing that was the grace they were to exercise in forgiving their brother? Surely it was because love hath its encrease from faith; if they could get more faith on Christ, they might be sure they should have more love to their brother also. The more strongly they could believe on Christ for the pardon of their own sins, not seven, but seventy times in a day committed against God, the more easie it would be to forgive their brother offending themselves seven times a day; which interpretation, our Saviours Reply to their prayer for faith favours,

favours, ver. 5. And the Lord said, if ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say to this Sycamore tree, be thou plucked up by the roots, and it should obey you. Where Christ shews the efficacy of justifying faith, by the power of a faith of miracles; As if he had said, you have hit on the right way to get a forgiving spirit; it is faith indeed that would enable you to conquer the unmercifulness of your hearts; though it were as deeply rooted in you, as this Sycamore Tree is in the ground; yet by faith you should be able to pluck it up; when we would have the whole Tree fruitful, we think we do enough to water the Root, knowing what the Root sucks from the earth, it will soon disperse into the branches. Thus, that sap and fatness, faith, which is the radical grace, draws from Christ, will be quickly diffused through the branches of the other graces, and tasted in the pleasantness of their fruit.

Thirdly, Faith defends the Christian in the exercise of all his graces. *By faith we stand*, Rom. 11. 30. As a Souldier under the protection of his shield, stands his ground, and doth his duty, notwithstanding all the shot that are made against him, to drive him back; when faith fails, then every grace is put to the ran and rout. *Abraham's simplicity and sincerity, how was it put to disorder*, when he dissembled with *Abimelech* concerning his wife? And why, but because his faith failed him? *Job's patience received a wound*, when his hand grew weary, and his shield of faith, which should have covered him, hung down. Indeed no grace is safe, if from under the wing of faith; Therefore to secure *Peter* from falling from all grace, Christ tells him, *He had pray'd that his faith should not fail*, Luke 22. 32. This was the reserve that Christ took care should be kept, to recover his other graces, when foyled by the enemy, and to bring him off that encounter, wherein he was so sadly bruised and broken. It is said, that Christ could not do many mighty things in his own Country, because of their unbelief, Mar. 13. 58. Neither can Satan do any great hurt to the Christian, so long as faith is upon the place. It is true, he aims to fight faith above all, as that which keeps him from coming at the rest; but he is not able long to stand before it. Let a Saint be never so humble, patient, devout, alas, Satan will easily pick some hole or other in these graces, and break in upon him when he stands in the best array; if faith be

not

not in the Field to cover these. This is the grace that makes him face about, and take him to his heels, 1 Pet. 5.9.

4.

Fourthly, Faith alone procures acceptance with God for all the other graces, and their works. By faith Abel offered that excellent sacrifice, to which God gave such a gracious testimony, Heb. 11.4. When the Christian hath wrought hardest in a day, and hath spun the finest, evenest thread of obedience at the wheel of duty; he is afraid to carry home his work at Night with an expectation of any acceptance at Gods hands for his work sake. No, it is faith he makes use of, to present it thorough Christ to God for acceptance; we are said, 1 Pet. 2.5. To offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; that is, by faith in Christ; for without faith, Christ makes none of our sacrifices acceptable. God takes nothing kindly, but what the hand of faith presents; And so prevalent is faith with God, that he will take light gold, broken services at her hand; which, were they to come alone, would be rejected with indignation. As a favourite that hath the ear of his Prince, finds it easie to give his poor kindred entertained at Court also. So Joseph brought his Brethren into Pharaohs presence with great demonstrations of favour shewn them by him for his sake. And Esther woond Mordecai into a high preferment in Ahasuerus Court, who upon his own credit could get no further than to sit at the Gate. Thus faith brings those works and duties into Gods presence, which else were sure to be shut out, and pleading the righteousness of Christ, procures them to be received into such high favour with God, that they become his delight, Prov. 15.8. And as a pleasant perfume in his nostrils, Mal. 3.4.

5.

Fifthly, Faith brings in succours, when other graces fail. Two wayes the Christians graces may fail; In their activity, or in their evidence.

1.

1. In their activity; it is low water sometimes with the Christian. He cannot act so freely and vigorously then, as at another time when the Tyde runs high, through divine assistances that flow in again upon him; those temptations which he could at one time snap asunder, as easly as Sampson did his cords of flax; at another time he is sadly hampered with, that he cannot shake them off. Those duties which he performs with delight and joy,

joy, when his grace is in a healthful plight, at another time he pants and blows at; as much as a sick man doth to go up a Hill, so heavily doth he find them come off. Were not the Christian, think you, ill now on it, if he had no comings in, but from his own shop of duty? Here now is the excellency of faith, it succours the Christian in this his bankrupt condition. As Joseph got over his Brethren to him, and nourish't them out of his Granaries all the time of famine; so doth faith the Christian in this his penury of grace and duty. And this it doth two ways.

First, By laying claim to the fulness of that grace which is in Christ as its own; Why art thou dejected, O my soul, saith the Christians faith, for thy weak grace? There is enough in Christ, all fulness dwells in him; it pleased the Father it should be so, and that to pleasure thee in thy wants and weaknesses. It is a ministerial fulness; as the clouds carry Rain not for themselves, but the earth, so doth Christ his fulness of grace for thee. *He is made of God to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. When the Rags of the Christians own righteousness discourage and shame him, faith hath a Robe to put on, that covers all this uncomeliness, Christ is my righteousness, saith faith, and in him we are complete, Col. 2. 10. Faith hath two hands, a working hand, and a receiving hand; and the receiving hand relieves the working hand, or else there would be a poor house kept in the Christians bosom. We find Paul himself but in a starving condition, for all the comfort his own graces could with their earnings afford him; he is a wretched man in his own account, if these be all he hath to live upon, *Rom. 7. 24.* yet even then, when he sees nothing in his own Cupboard, his faith puts forth its receiving hand to Christ, and he is presently set at a rich Feast, for which you find him giving thanks, *ver. 25. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Secondly, Faith succours the Christian in the weakness and inactivity of his graces, by applying the promises for the Saints perseverance in grace. It brings great comfort to a sick man, though very weak at present, to hear his Physician tell him, that though he is low and feeble, yet there is no fear he will dye. The present weakness of grace is sad; but the fear of falling quite away far sadder. Now faith, and only faith, can be the messenger to bring this good news to the soul, that it shall persevere. Sense and

and Reason are quite posed and dunced here. It seems impossible to them, that such a bruised Reed should bear up against all the counterblasts of Hell, because they consider only what grace it self can do, and finding it so over-matched by the power and policy of Satan, think it but rational to give the Victory to the stronger side. But faith, when it seeth symptoms of death in the Saints grace, finds life in the promise, and comforts the soul with this, that the faithful God will not suffer his grace to see corruption; he hath undertook the physicking of his Saints, *Job. 15. 2. Every branch in me that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.* When Hazael came to enquire of *Elisha* for his sick Master, whether he should live or dye; the Prophet sent him with this answer back unto the King his Master, *Thou mayest certainly recover, howbeit the Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely dye,* 2 Kings 8. 10. That is, he might certainly recover for all his disease, but he should die by the traiterous bloody hand of Hazael his servant: give me leave only to allude to this, when the Christian consults with his faith, and enquires of it, whether his weak grace will fail or hold out, dye or live; faiths answer is, *Thy weak grace may certainly dye and fall away, but the Lord hath shewed me it shall live and persevere,* that is, in regard of its own weakness, & the mutability of mans nature, the Christians grace might certainly dye & come to nothing; but God hath shewn faith in the promise, that it shall certainly live and recover out of its lowest weakriess. What *David* said in regard of his House, that every Christian may say in regard of his grace. Though his grace be not so with God, so strong, so unchangeable in its self; yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation and my desire, 2 Sam. 23. 5. This salt of the Covenant is it, that shall keep (saith faith) thy weak grace from corruption. *Why art thou cast down (saith the Psalmist) O my soul? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God, Ps. 42. 11.* The health of *David's* countenance, was not in his countenance, but in his God, & this makes his faith silence his fears, & so peremptorily resolve upon it, that there is a time coming (how near soever he now lies to the graves mouth) when he shall yet praise him. The health and life of thy grace lie both of them, not in thy grace (saith faith) but in God, who is thy God; therefore I shall yet live and praise him.

I do not wonder that the weak Christian is melancholy and sad, when he sees his sickly face in any other glasse but this.

Secondly, the Christians grace may fail in the evidence of it. It may disappear, as stars do in a cloudy night; how oft do we hear the Christian say in an hour of desertion and temptation, I know not whether I love God or no in sincerity? I dare not say I have any true godly sorrow for sin; Indeed I have thought formerly these graces had a being in me; but now I am at a loss, what to think, yea, sometimes I am ready to fear the worst. Now in this dark benighted state, faith under-girds the souls ship, and hath two Anchors it casts forth, whereby the soul is staid from being driven upon the devouring quick-sands of despair and horror.

First, faith makes a discovery of the rich mercy in Christ to poor sinners, and calls the soul to look up to it, when it hath lost the sight of his own grace. It is no small comfort to a man that hath lost his acquaintance for a debt paid, when he remembers that the man he deals with is a merciful good man, though his discharge be not presently to be found. That God whom thou hast to do with, is very gracious; what thou hast lost, he is ready to restore; (the evidence of thy grace I mean) *David* begg'd this and obtain'd it, *Psa. 51*. Yea, faith faith, if it were true what thou fearest, that thy grace was never true; there is mercy enough in Gods heart to pardon all thy former hypocrisie; if now thou comest in the sincerity of thy heart, and so faith persuades the soul by an act of adventure to cast it self upon God in Christ; wilt thou not, faith faith, expect to find as much mercy at Gods hands, as thou canst look for at a mans? it is not beyond the line of created mercy, to forgive many unkindnesses, much falseness and unfaithfulness, upon an humble sincere acknowledgment of the same. The world is not so bad, but it abounds with Parents that can do thus much for their children, and Masters for their servants; And is that hard for God to do, which is so easie in his creature? thus faith vindicates Gods Name. And so long as we have not lost the sight of Gods merciful heart, our head will be kept above water, though we want the evidence of our own grace.

Secondly, faith goes further; When the Christian cannot see

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this grace or that in his own bosom; then faith makes a discovery of them in the promise, where they may be had. And 'tis some comfort, though a man hath no bread in his Cupboard, to hear there is some to be had in the Market. O faith the complaining Christian, there were some hope, if I could find but those relentings and meltings of soul which others have in their bosomes for sin; then I could run under the shadow of that promise, and take comfort, *blest are they which mourn; for they shall be comforted*, Mat. 5. but alas, my heart is as hard as the flint. Well, saith faith, for thy comfort know, there are not only promises to the mourning soul and broken heart, but there are promises, that God will break the heart, and give a spirit of mourning; so for other graces, not only promises to those that fear God, but *to put the fear of God into our hearts*. Not only promises to those that walk in his Statutes, and keep his Judgments; but also *to put his Spirit within us, and cause us to walk in his Statutes*. Why then O my soul, dost sit here bemoaning thy self fruitlessly, for what thou sayst thou hast not, when thou know'st where thou may'st have it for going? As Jacob said to his sons, *Why do ye look one upon another? behold I have heard there is corn in Egypt; get you down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may live and not dye*, Gen. 42. 1, 2. Thus faith rouzeth the Christian out of his amazed thoughts, upon which his troubled spirit dwells like one destitute of counsel, not knowing what to do; and turns his bootless complaints, wherein he must necessarily pine and starve, into fervent prayer for that grace he wants. There is bread in the promise (saith faith) sit not here languishing in a sluggish despondency, but get you down upon your knees; and humbly, but valiantly besiege the Throne of grace, for grace in this time of need. And certainly, the Christian may sooner get a new evidence for his grace, by pleading the promise, and plying the Throne of grace; than by yielding so far to his unbelieving thoughts, as to sit down, and melt away his strength and time in the bitterness of his spirit, (which Satan dearly likes) without using the means, which he will never do to any purpose, till faith brings thus much encouragement from the promise, that what he wants is there to be had freely and fully.

Exek. 36. 27.

S E C T. IV.

Fifthly, as faith succours the Christian when his other graces fail him most, so it brings in his comfort, when they most abound. Faith is to the Christian, as *Nehemiah* was to *Artaxerxes*; *Nehem.* 2. 1. Of all the graces, this is the Christians cup-bearer. The Christian takes the wine of joy out of faiths hand, rather than any other grace, *Rom.* 15. 13. *The God of peace fill you with all joy in believing.* It is observable, *1 Pet.* 1. to see how the Apostle there doth as it were crosse his hands, as once *Jacob* did in blessing his son *Josephs* children, and gives the preheminance to faith, attributing the Christians joy to his faith, rather than to his love; *ver.* 8. *Whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now you see him not; yet believing, ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* Mark, *believing ye rejoyce*, here is the door, the Christians chief joy, yea, all his fiduciary joy comes in at. It is Christ that we are in this respect allowed only to rejoyce in, *Phil.* 3. 3. *For we are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh;* where Christ is made the sole subject of our rejoycing fiduciarily, in opposition to all else; even our graces themselves, which become flesh, when thus rejoyced and gloried in. Christs blood is the wine that only glads the heart of God by way of satisfaction to his justice, and therefore only that can bring true gladness into the heart of man. When Christ promisseth the Comforter, he tells his Disciples from what vessel he should draw the wine of joy that he was to give them, *John* 16. 15. *He shall take of mine, and shall shew it you.* No grape of our own Vine is prest into this sweet Cup; as if Christ had said, when he comes to comfort you with the pardon of your sins, he shall take of mine, not any thing of yours; my blood by which I purchased your peace with God; not your own tears of repentance, by which you have mourned for your sins. All the blessed priviledges which believers are in-stated into, they are the fruits of Christs purchase, not of our earnings. Now the Christians joy flowing in from Christ, and not any thing that he poor creature doth or hath; hence it comes to passe,

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that faith above all the graces, brings in the Christians joy and comfort, because this is the grace that improves Christ, and what is Christ, for the souls advantage; as of grace, so of comfort. Faith is the good spy that makes discovery of the excellencies in Christ, and then makes report of all to the soul it sees in him, and knows of him. It is faith that broaches the Promises, turns the Cock, and sets them a running into the soul. It doth not only shew the soul how excellent Christ is, and what dainties are in the Promises; but it applies Christ to the soul, and carves out the sweet viands that are dish't forth in the Promises; yea, it puts them into the very mouth of the soul, it masticates and grinds the Promise so, that the Christian is filled with its strength and sweetness. Till faith comes and brings news of the souls welcome, O how maidenly and uncomfortably do poor creatures sit at the Table of the Promise? like *Hannah*, they weep and eat not; no alas, they dare not be so bold; but when faith comes, then the soul falls to, and makes a satisfying meal indeed; no dish on the Table but faith will taste of. Faith knows God sets them not on, to go off untoucht. It is, though an humble, yet a bold grace, because it knows it cannot be so bold with God in his own way, as it is welcome.



CHAP. III.

Sheweth unbelief to have the precedency among sins, as faith hath among graces.

IS faith the chief of graces? this may help us to conceive of the horrible nature of unbelief. This surely will deserve as high a place among sins, as faith among graces. Unbelief, it is the *Beelzebub*, the Prince of sins. As faith is the radical grace, so is unbelief a radical sin, a sinning sin. As of all sinners, those are most infamous, who are ring-leaders and make others sin, which is the brand that God hath set upon *Jeroboams* name, *Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who sinn'd, and made Israel to sin*, 1 Kings 14. 16. So among sins they are most horrid that are most productive of other sins; such a one is unbelief above any other. It is a ring-leading sin, a sin making sin. The first poysonous breath which *Eve* suckt in from the tempter, was sent in these words, *Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* Gen. 3. 1. As if he had said, consider well on the matter, do you believe God meant so? can you think so ill of God, as to believe he would keep the best fruit of the whole garden from you? this was the Traitors gate, at which all other sins entred into her heart; and it continues to this day of the same use to Satan, for the hurrying souls into other sins, called therefore *an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from God*, Heb. 3. 12. The Devil sets up this sin of unbelief, as blind betwixt the sinner and God; that the shot which come from the threatening, and are levell'd at the sinners breast, may not be dreaded and feared by him; and then the wretch can be as bold with his lust as the Pioneer is at his work, when
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once he hath got his basket of earth between him and the enemies bullets. Nay, this unbelief doth not only choak the bullets of wrath, which are sent out of the Laws fiery mouth, but it damps the motions of grace which come from the Gospel; all the offers of love which God makes to an unbelieving heart, they fall like seed into dead earth, or like sparks into a river, they are out as soon as they fall into it.

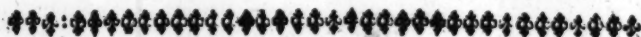
The Word (it is said, *Heb. 4. 2.*) *did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.* The strength of the whole body of sin lies in this lock of unbelief. There is no mastering of a sinner, while unbelief is in power; this will carry all arguments away (whether they be from Law or Gospel) that are pressed upon him, as easily as *Sampson* did the doors, posts, with bar and all from the City *Gaza*, *Judg. 16. 2.* It is a sin that doth keep the field, one of the last of all others; that which the sinner is last convinced of, and the Saint ordinarily last conquerour of. It is one of the chief strengths, and fastness unto which the Devil retreats, when other sins are routed. O how oft do we hear a poor sinner confess and bewail other sins (he hath lived in formerly) with brinish tears, but will not hearken yet to the offer of mercy in Christ; bid him believe on Christ, and he shall be saved, (which was the doctrine of *Paul* and *Silas* preach't to the trembling *Jay-lor*) alas he dares not, he will not, you can hardly perswade him it is his duty to do so. The Devil hath now betaken himself to this City of gates and bars, where he stands upon his guard; and the more strongly to fortifie himself in it, he hath the most specious pretences for it, of any other sin. It is a sin that he makes the humbled soul commit, out of a fear of sinning; and so stabs the good Name of God, for fear of dishonouring him by a saucy presumptuous faith. Indeed it is a sin by which Satan intends to put the greatest scorn upon God, and unfold all his cankered malice against him at once. It is by faith that the Saints have all obtained a good report; yea, it is by the Saints faith, that God hath a good report in the world; and by unbelief, the Devil doth his worst, to raise an evil report of God in the world; as if he were not what his own promise, and his Saints faith witness him to be. In a word, it is a sin that hell gapes for of all other. There are two sins that claim a prebeminence in hell; *Hypocrisy* and *Unbelief*; and therefore other sinners are threatned to have their portion with hypocrites,

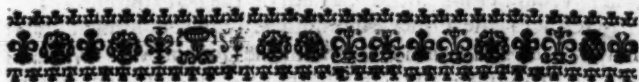
Acts 16. 31.

hypocrites, *Mat. 24. 5.* and with unbelievers, *Luke 12. 46.* As if those infernal Mansions were taken up principally for these, and all others were but inferiour prisoners. But of the two, unbelief is the greatest, and that which may with an *Emphasis*, be called above this or any other, *The damning sin.* He that believes not, is condemned already, *Joh. 3. 18.* He hath his *Mittimus* already to Jail; yea, he is in it already in a sense; he hath the brand of a damned person on him. The Jews are said, *Rom. 11. 32. to be shut up in unbelief.* A surer prison the Devil cannot keep a sinner in. Faith shuts the soul up in the promise of life and happiness, as God shut *Noah* into the *Ark.* It is said, *Gen. 7. 16. The Lord shut him in;* thus faith shuts the soul up in Christ, and the Ark of his Covenant from all fear of danger, from heaven or hell; and on the contrary, unbelief shuts a soul up in guilt and wrath, that there is no more possibility of escaping damnation for an unbeliever, than for one to escape burning, that is shut up in a fiery Oven; no help can come to the sinner, so long as this bolt of unbelief is on the door of his heart. As our salvation is attributed to faith, rather than to other graces, though none wanting in a saved person; so sinners damnation and ruine is attributed to their unbelief, though other sins found with it in the person damned; the Spirit of God passeth over the Jews hypocrisie, murmuring, rebellion, and lays their destruction at the door of this one sin of unbelief, *Heb. 3. 19. They could not enter in b. cause of unbelief.* O sinners, (you who live under the Gospel I mean) if you perish, know before-hand what is your undoing, it is your unbelief that does it. If a Malefactor that is condemned to dye, be offered his life by the Judge upon reading a *Psalm* of mercy, and he reads it not, we may say his not reading hangs him. The promise of the Gospel is this *Psalm* of mercy, which God offers in his Son to Law-condemned sinners; believing is reading this *Psalm* of mercy; if thou believest not, and art damned, thou goest to hell rather for thy final unbelief, than any of thy other sins, for which a discharge is offered thee upon thy receiving Christ, and believing on him. Let this cause us all to rise up against this sin, as the *Philistines* did against *Sampson*, whom they called the destroyer of their Countrey, *Judg. 16. 24.* This is the destroyer of your souls, and that is worse; yea, it destroys them with a bloodier hand than other sins do, that are not aggravated with this. We find two gene-

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ral heads of indirements, upon which the whole world of sinners shall be condemned at the great day, 2 *Thes.* 1.8. where Christs coming to judgment is exprest; and those miserable undone creatures, that shall fall under his condemning sentence, they are comprized in these two; such as *know not God*, and such as *obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. The *Heathens* negative unbelief of the Gospel, shall not be charged upon them, because they never had it preach't to them; No, they shall be sent to hell for *not knowing God*, and so shall escape with a lighter damnation by far, than *Jews* or *Christian Gentiles*, to whom the Gospel hath been preach't (though to some of these, with a stronger and longer continued beam of light, than others.) The dismal charge which shall be brought against these, will be, that they have not obeyed the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, that is, not believed on Christ, called therefore *the obedience of faith*, *Rom.* 16. 26. And certainly we cannot but think, that there shall be a torment proper to these Gospel-refusers, which those that never had the offer of grace, shall not feel in hell. And among those that obey not the Gospel, the greatest vengeance waits for them that have had the longest and passionatest treaty of mercy allowed them. These are they who put God to the greatest expence of mercy, and therefore must necessarily expect the greatest proportion of wrath and vengeance to be measured to them; yea, their unbelief puts Christ and the grace of God in him, to the greatest shame and scorn that is possible for creatures to do; and it is but righteous that God should therefore put their unbelief and themselves with it to the greatest shame before men and Angels, of any other sinners.





CHAP. IV.

*Some Arguments to make us serious in the tryal
of our faith, with one Direction taken from the
manner of the Spirits working faith.*

IS Faith the chief of graces? Let this make us the more curious and careful, that we be not cheated in our faith. There are some things of so inconsiderable worth, that they will not pay us for the pains and care we take about them; and there to be choise and scrupulous is folly; to be negligent and incurious, wisdom. But, there are other things of such worth, and weighty consequence, that none but he that means to call his wisdom in question, can be willing to be mistaken or cozened in. Who that is wise, would pay, as for a precious stone, and have a pebble, or at best a *Bristol-Stone* put upon him for his money? Who, when his life is at stake, and knows no way to save it, but by getting some one rich Drugg which is very scarce, but to be had, would not be very careful to have the right? O my dear Friends, doth it not infinitely more concern you, to be careful in your merchandize for this pearl of precious faith? can you be willing to take the Devils false sophisticated ware off his hand? a mock-faith which he would cheat you with, rather than obtain the faith unfeigned, which God hath to give unto his children; called therefore *the faith of Gods Elect*? Will the Devils dreggs, that are sure to kill thee, serve thy turn, when thou art offer'd by God himself a rich Drugg that will cure thee? When thou goest to buy a garment, thou askest for the best piece of stoffe, or cloth in the shop. In the Market thou wouldst have the best meat for thy belly; when with the Lawyer, the best counsel for thy Estate; and of the Physician, the best di-

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reſtore for thy health. Art thou for the beſt in all, but for thy ſoul? Wouldſt thou not have a faith of the beſt kind alſo? If a man receives falſe money, who doth he wrong but himſelf? and if thou beſt goll'd with a falſe faith, the loſs is thy own, and that no ſmall one; thy ſelf will think ſo, when thou com'eſt to the Bar, & God ſhall bid thee either pay the debt thou'oweſt him, or go to rot and roar in Hells priſon; then how wilt thou be confounded? when thou produceſt thy faith, and hopeſt to ſave thy ſelf with this, that thou believeſt on the Lord Jeſus, but ſhalt have thy confidence rejected, and God tell thee to thy teeth, it is not faith, but a lye in thy right hand that thou haſt got, and therefore he will not accept the payment, though it be Chriſt himſelf thou offereſt to lay down; nay, that he will give thee up into the Tormentors hand, and that not only for not believing, but alſo for counterfeiting the King of Heavens coyn, and ſetting his Name on thy falſe money; which thou doſt by pretending to faith, when it is a falſe one thou haſt in thy boſom. This were enough to awaken your care in the tryal of your faith; but to give ſome further weight to the Exhortation, we ſhall caſt in theſe three conſiderations.

SECT. I.

- I. **Firſt**, As thy faith is, ſo are all thy other graces. As a mans marriage is, ſo are all his childrē, legitimate, or illegitimate. Thus, as our marriage is to Chriſt, ſo all our graces are. Now, it is faith by which we are married to Chriſt. *I have eſpouſed you to one husband*, ſaith Paul to the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 11. 2. How, but by their faith? 'Tis faith whereby the ſoul gives its conſent to take Chriſt for her Husband. Now if our faith be falſe, then our marriage to Chriſt is feigned; and if that be feigned, then all our pretended graces are baſe born, how goodly an out-ſide ſoever they have (as a Baſtard may have a fair face) they are illegitimate; our humility, patience, temperance, all Baſtards; and you know, *a baſtard was not to enter into the Congregation*, Deut. 23. 2. No more ſhall any baſtard-grace, enter into the Congregation of the juſt in Heaven. He that hath children of his own, wil not make anothers Baſtard his Heir. God hath children of his own, to inherit.

herit Heavens glory, in whose hearts he hath by his own Spirit begotten those heavenly graces, which do truly resemble his own holy nature; surely he will never settle it upon strangers, counterfeit Believers, that are the Devils Brats and By-blows.

Secondly, Consider the excellency of true faith, makes false faith so much the more odious. Because a Kings son is an extraordinary personage, therefore it is so high a crime for an ignoble person to counterfeit himself to be such a one. It is by faith that we become the sons of God, 1 Joh. 12. And what a high presumption is it then, that by a false faith thou committest? Thou pretendest thy self to be a child of God, when no Heaven-blood runs in thy veins, but hast more reason to look for thy kindred in hell, and derive thy pedigree from Satan; this passeth for no less than blasphemy in the account of the Scripture, *Rev. 2. 9. I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan.* God loaths such with his heart. A false friend, is worse than an open enemy in mans judgment. And a hypocritical Judas, more abhor'd by God than a bloody Pilate; either therefore get true faith, or pretend to none. The Ape, because he hath the face of a man, but not the soul of a man, is therefore the most ridiculous of all creatures. And of all sinners, none will be put more to shame at the last day, than such as have aped & imitated the Believer in some exterior postures of profession, but never had the spirit of a Believer, so as to perform one vital act of faith. The Psalmist tells us of some, *whose image God will despise, Psal. 73. 20.* It is spoken chiefly of the wicked mans temporary prosperity (which for its short continuance, is compared to the image or representation of a thing in the fancy of a sleeping man that then is busie, and pleasesh us with many fine pleasing objects, but all are lost, when our sleep leaves us) this God will despise at the great day, when he shall not give heaven and glory, by the estates and honours, that men had in the World, but tumble them down to Hell, if graceless, as well as the poorest Beggar in the World. But, there is another sort of persons, whose image God will at that day despise more than these, and that is, the image of all temporary Believers, and unsound Professors, who have a phantastical faith, which they set up, like an image in their imaginati-

ons, and dance about it with as many self-pleasing thoughts, as a man doth that is dreaming himself to be some great Prince; but this great Idol shall then be broken, and the Worshippers of it hissed down to Hell with the greatest shame of any other.

Thirdly, None stand at greater disadvantage for the obtaining a true faith, than he who flatters himself with a false one. *See'st thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool, than of him,* Prov. 26. 12. that is, there is more hope of persuading him; of all fools, the conceited fool is the worst. Pride makes a man incapable of receiving counsel. *Nebuchadnezzar's mind, is said to be hardened in pride,* Dan. 5. 20. There is no reasoning with a proud man; he cafiles himself in his own opinion of himself, and there stands upon his defence against all Arguments that are brought. Bid a conceited Professor labour for faith, or he is undone; and the man will tell you, that you mistake and knock at the wrong door; It is the ignorant person or profane you should go to on that errand; he thanks God he is not now to seek for a faith; and thus he blesteth himself in his good condition, when God knows, *he feeds of ashes, but a deceived heart hath so turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his own soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?* Isa. 44. 20. The ignorant profane person, like the *Psalmist's man of low degree*, is plain vanity. It is not hard to make themselves to acknowledge as much, that they have nothing, deserve nothing, can look for nothing as they are, but Hell and damnation; but such as pretend to faith, and content themselves with a false one, they are (like the *men of high degree*) a *lie*, which is vanity as well as the other, but with a specious cover over it, that hides it; therefore the Devil is forward enough to put poor silly souls on believing, that he may forestall (if he can) the Spirits marker, & prevent the creatures obtaining of a true faith, by cheating of it with a counterfeit, like *Jeroboam's* wicked policy, who to keep the *Israelites* from going to *Jerusalem*, and hankering after the true worship of God there, set up something like a Religious worship nearer hand at home in the *golden Calves*; and this pleased many well enough, that they missed not their walk to *Jerusalem*. O Friends, take heed therefore of being cheated with a false faith. Every one, I know, would have the living child to be hers, and not the dead one. We would all pass for such,

such, as have the true faith, and not the false; but be not your own Judges, appeal to the Spirit of God, and let him with the Sword of his Word come and decide the controversy, which faith is thine, the true or false.

SECT. II.

By this time possibly you may be solicitous to know what your faith is, and how you may come to judge of the truth of it. Now for your help therein, take these two directions. One taken from the manner of the Spirits working faith, the other from the properties of faith when it is wrought.

First, From the manner of the Spirits working faith in the soul. It is incomparably the greatest work, that passeth upon the soul from the Spirit of Christ; It is called, the *ὑπερβάλλον μὲν ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις εὐρεῖται*, *The exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe*, Eph. 1. 19. Observe with what a heap of expressions the Spirit of God loads our weak understandings, that labouring under the weight of them, and finding the difficulty of reaching the significance of them, we might be the more widened, to conceive of that power, which can never be fully understood by us (being indeed infinite, and so too big to be inclosed within the narrow walls of our understandings) power, greatness of power, exceeding greatness, and lastly, exceeding greatness of his power, that is of God. What Angel in Heaven can tell us, what all these amount to? God (with Reverence be it spoken) sets his whole force to this work. It is compared to no less than the *working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, &c. ver. 20, 21.* To raise any one from the dead, is a mighty, an Almighty work; But to raise Christ from the dead, carries more wonder with it, than to raise any other; he had a heavier Grave-stone to keep him down than any besides, the weight of a Worlds sin lay upon him, yet notwithstanding this, he is raised with power by the Spirit, not only out of the grave, but into glory. Now the power God puts forth upon the soul in working faith, is according to this.

this of raising Christ, for indeed the sinners soul is as really dead in sin, as Christs body was in the grave for sin. Now I speak, poor creature, art thou any way acquainted with such a power of God, to have been at work in thee? Or dost thou think slightly of believing, and so shew thy self a stranger to this mystery? Certainly, this one thing might resolve many (if they desired to know their own state) that they have no faith, because they make faith so trivial and light a matter, as if it were as easie to believe, as to say they do; and it were of no more difficulty to receive Christ into their souls by faith, than to put a bit of bread into their mouths with their hand. Ask some, whether ever such a day or time of Gods power came over their heads, to humble them for sin, drive them out of themselves, and draw them effectually unto Christ; And they may answer you as those did *Peier*, when he askt, *Whether they had received the holy Ghost since they believed; They said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any holy Ghost*, Acts 19.2. So these might say, we know not whether there be any such power required to the working of faith or no.

But to descend into a more particular consideration of this powerful work of the Spirit upon the soul for the production of faith; to which it will be necessary to consider what posture the Spirit of Christ finds the soul in before he begins this great work; and then how he makes his addresses to the soul, and what acts he puts forth upon the soul for the working faith.

I.

First, For the posture of the soul; The Spirit finds the creature in such a state, as it neither can, nor will contribute the least help to the work. As the *Prince of the world*, when he came to tempt Christ, *found nothing in him*, to befriend and further his tempting design; so when the Spirit of Christ comes, he finds as little encouragement from the sinner; no party within the Castle of the soul, to side with him, when he comes first to set down before it, and lay siege to it; But a'l the powers of the whole man in arms against him. Hence it is that so many scornful answers are sent out to the summons that are given sinners to yield. *He came unto his own, and his own received him not*, Joh. 1.11. Never was any Garrison more resolved to stand out against both the Treaties and Batteries of an assailing enemy, than the carnal heart

heart is against all means, that God useth to reduce it into his obedience. The noblest operations of the soul, they are *earthly, sensual, devilish*, Jam. 3. 15. So that, except Heaven and Earth can meet; sensual and spiritual please one palate; God and the Devil agree; there is no hope that a sinner of himself should like the motion Christ makes, or that with any argument he should be won over to like it, so long as the ground of dislike remains in his earthly, sensual and devilish nature.

Secondly, We proceed to shew how the Spirit makes his addresses to the soul, and what acts he puts forth upon it for the working faith. Now the Spirits address is suited to the several faculties of the soul; the principal of which are these three, *understanding, conscience and will*; These are like three Forts, one within the other, which must all be reduced, before the Town be taken, the sinner I mean subdued to the obedience of faith. And to these the Spirit makes his particular addresses, putting forth an act of Almighty power upon every one of them, and that in this order. *First*, The Spirit makes his approach to the understanding, and on it he puts forth an act of illumination. The Spirit will not work in a dark shop; the first thing he doth in order to faith, is to beat out a window in the soul, and let in some light from Heaven into it. Hence Believers are said *to be renewed in the spirit of their minds*, Eph. 4. 23. which the same Apostle calleth being *renewed in knowledge*, Col. 3. 10. By nature we know little of God, and nothing of Christ, or the way of salvation by him. The eye of the creature therefore must be opened to see the way of life, before he can by faith get into it. God doth not use to waite souls to Heaven, like passengers in a ship, who are shut under the Hatches, and see nothing all the way they are sayling to their Port; if so, that prayer might have been spared, which the Psalmist inspired of God, breaths forth in the behalf of the blind *Gentiles*, Psal. 67. 2. *That thy way may be known upon earth, & thy saving health among all Nations.* As faith is not a naked assent without affiance and innitency on Christ; so neither is it a blind assent, without some knowledge. If therefore thou continuest still in thy brutish ignorance, and knowest not so much as who Christ is, and what he hath done for the salvation of poor sinners, and what thou must do to get interest in him, thou art far enough from believing. & the day be not broke in thy soul, much lesse is the

Sun.

Sunne of Righteousness arisen by faith in thy soul.

Again secondly, When the Spirit of God hath sprung with a divine light into the understanding, then he makes his address to the conscience, and the act which passeth upon that, is an *act of conviction*, Joh. 16. 8. *He shall convince the world, &c.* Now this conviction is nothing but a reflection of the light that is in the understanding upon the conscience, whereby the creature feels the weight and force of those truths he knows, so as to be brought into a deep sense of them. Light in a direct beam heats not, nor doth knowledge swimming in the brain affect. Most under the Gospel, know that unbelief is a damning sin, and that there is no Name to be saved by, but the Name of Christ; yet how few of those, know this convincingly, so as to apply this to their own Consciences, and to be affected with their own deplored state, who are the unbelievers and Christless persons? As he is a convicted Drunkard in Law, who in open Court, or before a lawful Authority, upon clear testimony and deposition of Witnesses, is found and judged to be such. So, he Scripturally is a convicted sinner, who upon the clear evidence of the Word brought against him by the Spirit, is found by his own Conscience (Gods officer in his bosom) to be so; speak now poor creature, did ever such an act of the Spirit of God pass upon thee, as this is? which that thou mayest the better discern of, try thy self by these few characters of a convinced person.

* *First*, A sinner truly convinced, is not only convinced of this sin or that sin, but of the evil of all sin. It is an ill sign, when a person seems in a passion to cry out of one sin, and to be senseless of another sin. A par-boyled Conscience is not right, soft in one part, and hard in another; the Spirit of God is uniform in its work.

Secondly, The convinced sinner is not only convinced of acts of sin, but of the state of sin also; he is not only affected with what he hath done (this Law broken, and that mercy abused) but with what his state and present condition is. *Peter* leads *Simon Magus* from that one horrid act he committed, to the consideration of that which was worse, the dismal state that he discovered him to be in; *I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity*, Acts 8. 23. Many will confess they do not do as they should, who wil not think by any means so ill of them-

themselves, that their state is naught, a state of sinne and death; whereas the convinced soul freely puts himself under this sentence of death, owns his condition; & dissembles not his pedigree; I am a most vile wretch (saith he) a limb of Satan, full of sin, as the toad is of rank poison; my whole nature lies in wickednesse, even as the dead rotten carcasie doth in its slime and putrefaction. I am a child of wrath, born to no other inheritance then hell flames; and if God will now tread me down thither, I have not one righteous syllable to object against his proceedings, but there is that in my own conscience which will clear him from having done me any wrong in my doom.

Thirdly, the convinced sinner doth not only condemn himself for what he hath done and is, but he despairs of himself, as to any thing he can now do to save himself; many, though they go so farre as to confesse they are vile wretches, and have lived wickedly, and for this deserve to die; yet when they have put the rope about their neck by a self-condemning act, they are so farre from being convinced of their own impotency, that they hope to cut the rope with their repentance, reformation, and I know not what bundle of good works, which they think shall redeem their credit with God, and recover his favour, which their former sinnes have unhappily lost them. And this comes to passe, because the plough of conviction did not go deep enough to teare up those secret roots of self-confidence, with which the heart of every sinner is wofully tainted; whereas every soul thoroughly convinced by the Spirit, is a self-despairing soul; he sees himself beyond his own help, like a poor condemned prisoner, laden with so many heavy irons, that he sees it is impossible for him to make an escape with all his skill or strength out of the hands of justice; O friends, look whether the work be gone thus farre in your souls or no. Most that perish, it is not their disease that kills them, but their Physitian; they think to cure themselves, and this leaves them incurable. Speak soul, did the Lord ever ferret thee out of this burrow where so many earth themselves? Art thou as much at a losse what to do, as sensible for what thou hast done? Doeest thou see hell in thy sin, and despair in thy self? Hath God got thee out of this *Keilah*, and convinced thee if thou shouldst stay in the self-confidence of thy repentance, reformation

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and

and duties, they would all deliver thee up into the hands of Gods justice and wrath, when they shall come against thee? then indeed thou hast escaped one of the finest snares that the wit of hell can weave.

Fourthly, the convinced sinner is not only convinced of sin, so as to condemn himself, and despair of himself, but he is convinced of a full provision laid up in Christ for self-condemned and self-despairing ones, *John 1.6. He shall convince the world of sin. Ver. 9. and of righteousness, ver. 10.* And this is as necessary an antecedent to faith, as any of the former. Without this, the soul convinced of sin, is more like to go to the gallows with Judas, or fall on the sword of the Law, as the *Jaylour* attempted to do on his (when he thought his condition desperate) than think of coming to Christ, who will go to his door, that hath not wherewithal to relieve him.

The third and last faculty to be dealt with is the *Will*, and on this (for the production of faith) the Spirit puts forth an *act of renovation*, whereby he doth sweetly, but powerfully encline the Will (which before was rebellious and refractory) to accept of Christ, and make a free deliberate choice of him, for his Lord and Saviour. I say a free choice, not only cudgell'd into him with apprehensions of wrath, as one may runne under an enemies pent-house in a storm, whose door he would have passed by in fair weather, and never have lookt that way. Speak soul, dost please thy self, in choosing Christ? do'st go to Christ, not only for safety, but delight? so the Spouse, *I fate under his shadow with great delight, Cant. 2.3.* I say a deliberate choice, wherein the soul well weighs the terms Christ is offered on, and when it hath considered all seriously, likes them, & closeth with him. Like *Ruth*, who when *Naomi* spake the worst she could to discourage her, yet liked her mothers company too well, to lose it for those troubles that attended her; speak soul, hath the Spirit of God thus put his golden key into the lock of thy Will, to open the everlasting door of thy heart to let Christ the King of glory in? Hath he not only open'd the eye of thy understanding, as he awak't *Peter* asleep in prison, and caused the chains of senselesse and stupidity to fall off thy conscience, but also open'd the iron gate of thy Will to let thee out of the prison of impenitency, where even now thou wast fast bound in, yea, brought thee to knock at heaven doot for entertainment.

ment. As *Peter* did at the house of *Mary* (where the Church was met) be of good comfort, thou mayest know assuredly, that God hath sent not his Angel, but his own Spirit, and hath delivered thee out of the hand of sin, Satan and justice.

We proceed to the tryal of our faith from the properties of true faith; and we shall content our selves with three.



CHAP. V.

*Where our faith is put upon tryal by its obedience,
with some particular Characters that faiths obedience is stampt with.*

THIS choice excellent faith, it is an obediential faith, that is, true faith on the promise, works obedience to the command. *Abraham* is famous for his obedience, no command, how difficult soever, came amiss to him. He is an obedient servant indeed, that when he doth but hear his master knock with his foot, leaves all and runs presently to know his masters will and pleasure. Such a servant had God of *Abraham*, who raised up the righteous man from the East, called him to his foot? *Isaiah* 41. 2. But what was the Spring that set *Abrahams* obedience a going? see for this, *Heb.* 11. 8. By faith *Abraham*, when he was called to go out into a place, which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and he went out, &c. As it is impossible to please God without faith, so it is impossible not to desire to please God with faith. It may well go for an idol faith that hath hands, but doth not work, feet but doth not walk in the Statutes of God. No sooner had Christ cured the woman in the Gospel of her seaver, but it is said, she rose and ministered unto them, *Mat.* 8. 15. Thus, the believing soul stands up and ministers unto Christ, in gratitude and obedience. Faith is not lazy, it inclines not

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the soul to sleep, but work; it sends the creature not to bed, there to snort away his time in ease and sloth, but into the field. The night of ignorance and unbelief, that was the creatures sleeping time; but when the Sunne of righteousness ariseth, and 'tis day in the soul, then the creature riseth and goeth forth to his labour. The first words that break out of faiths lips, are those of *Saul*, in his hour of conversion, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Acts 9. 6. Faith turns the *Jordan*, and alters the whole course of a man. *We were* (saith the Apostle) *foolish and disobedient*, Tit. 3. 3. But after the kindeesse and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, ver. 4. then the case was altered, as it follows. And therefore take your soul fingers off the promise, and pretend no more to faith, if ye be children of *Belsal*, such, whose necks do not freely stoop to this yoke of obedience. The Devil himself may as soon passe for a believer, as a disobedient soul. Other things he can shew as much as you; doest thou pretend to knowledge? thou wilt not deny the Devil to be a greater Scholar than thy self (I hope) and that in Scripture knowledge; doest thou believe the Scripture to be true? and doth not he more strongly? doest thou tremble? he much more. It is obedience he wants, and this makes him a Devil, and it will make thee like him also.

Quest.

Quest. But you may ask, what stamp is there to be found on faiths obedience, which will distinguish it from all counterfeits? for there are many fair semblances of obedience, which the Devil will never grutch us the having.

Ans.

1.

Ans. Take these two Characters of the obedience of faith:
1. Faiths obedience begins at the heart, and from thence it diffuseth and dilates it self to the outward man, till it over-spreads the whole man in a sincere endeavour. As in natural life, the first part that lives is the heart, so the first that faith subdues into obedience is the heart. It is called a *faith which purifies the heart*, Acts 15. 9. And the believing *Romans obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered to them*, Rom. 6. 17. Whereas a false faith, which apes this true faith (as Art imitates nature) begins without, and there ends. All the seeming good works of a counterfeit believer, they are like the beautiful colour in a picture's face, which comes not from a principle of life within, but the Painters pencil without: such were those, *John* 2. 23. who

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are said to believe on Christ. But, Christ did not commit himself to them, ver. 24. and why? See v. r. 25. for he knew what was in man; he cared not for the painted porch and goodly out-side; he knew what was in man, and by that knowledge he knew them to be rotten at core, naught at heart, before they were speckt on the skin of their exterior conversation.

Quest. But how may I know my obedience is the obedience of the heart.

Ans. If it comes from love, than it is the obedience of the heart. He commands the heart, that is Master of its love. The Cattle must needs yield, when he that keeps it, and hath the keyes of it, submits. Love is the affection that governs this royal Fort of mans heart; we give our hearts to them we give our love. And indeed thus it is, that faith brings the heart over into subjection and obedience to God, by putting it under a Law of love, Gal. 5. 6. *faith which worketh by love.* First, faith worketh love, and then it worketh by it. As first the workman sets an edge on his tooles, and then he carves and cuts with them; so faith sharpens the souls love to God, and then acts by it; or as a Statuary, to make some difficult piece, before he goes about it, finding hands numme with cold, that he cannot handle his tooles so nimbly as he should, goes first to the fire, and with the help of its heat chafes them, till they of stiff and numme, become agile and active, then to work he falls; so faith brings the soul, awke and listlesse enough (God knows) to any duty, unto the meditation of the peerlesse matchlesse love of God in Christ to it, and at this fire faith staies the Christians thoughts, till his affections begin to kindle, and come to some sense of his love of God, and now the Christian bestirs himself for God with might and maine.

Quest. 2. But how may I know my obedience is from love?

Ans. I'll send you to Saint John to be resolved of this Question, 1 Epist. 5. 3. *This is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous;* speak soul, what account have you of the Commandments? do you look upon them as an iron chain about your legs, and think your selves prisoners because you are tied to them? or do you value them as a chaine of Gold about your neck, and esteem your selves favorites of the

King.

Quest.

Ans.

Quest. 2.

Ans.

King of heaven, that he will honour you, to honour him by serving of him? so did as great a Prince as the world had, *who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer (a willingly,* 1 Chron. 29. Not, who am I, that I should be a King over my people? But, that I should have a heart so gracious, to offer willingly with my people? nor, who am I, that they should serve me, but that thou wilt honour me with a heart, to serve thee with them? The same holy man in another place speaks of sinne, as his prison, and his obedience as his liberty. *I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts,* Psal. 119. 45. when God gives him a large heart for duty, he is as thankful as a man that was bound in prison is, when he is set at liberty, that he may visit his friends, and follow his calling. The only grievous thing to a loving soul, is to be hindered in his obedience; this is that which makes such a one out of love with the world, and being in it; because it cumbers him in his work, and many times keeps him from it. As a conscionable faithful servant, that is lame or sickly, and can do his master little service, O how it grieves him? Thus, the loving soul bemoans it self, that it should put God to so much cost, and be so unprofitable under it? speak, is this thy temper? blessed art thou of the Lord! There is a jewel of two diamonds, which this will prove thou art owner of, that the crown jewels, of all the Princes of the world, are not so worthy to be valued with, as a heap of dust or dung, is to be compared with them. The jewel, I mean, is made of this pair of graces, faith and love, they are thine, and with them, God and all that he hath and is. But, if the commandments of God be grievous (as they are to every carnal heart) and thou countest thy self at ease, when thou canst make an escape from a duty to commit a sinne, as the beast doth, when his collar is off, and he in his fat pasture again; now thou art where thou wouldst be, and can shew some spirits, that thou hast; but when conscience puts on the trace again, thou art dull and heavie again; O it speaks thee to have no love to God, and therefore no faith on God, that is true. That is a jade indeed, who hath no mettel but in the pasture.

2.

Secondly, the obedience of faith is full of self-denial. Faith keeps the creature low, as in what he hath, so in what he doth. *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,* Gal. 2. 20. As if he had said,

said, I pray mistake me not, when I say, I live, I mean not that I live by my self, or of my self, but Christ in me. I live, and that deliciously, but it is Christ that keeps the house, not I. I mortifie my corruptions, and vanquish temptations, but I am debtor to Christ for the strength. None can write here, as one did under Pope *Adrian's* statue (where the place of his birth was named, and those princes that had preferr'd him from step to step, till he mounted the Popes chaire, but God left out of all the story) *Nihil h'c Deus fecit, God did nothing for this man.* No, blessed *Paul*, and in him every believer, acknowledgeth God for sole founder and benefactor too of all the good he hath and doth. They are not ashamed to acknowledge who they are beholden to for all. *These are the children which God hath graciously given me*, said *Jacob*. And, these the services which God hath graciously assisted me in, saith *Paul*, 1 Cor. 15. 10. *I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me*; all is *ex dono Dei*. O how chary are Saints of writing themselves authours of their own good works, parts, or abilities? *Art thou able* (said the King to *Daniel*) *to make known unto me the dream which I have seen*? Dan. 2. 26. Now mark, he doth not say, as the proud Astrologers, chap. 2. 4. *we will shew thee the interpretation*; that fitted their mouths well enough who had no acquaintance with God, but not *Daniel*, the servant of the living God; though, at that very time he had the secret revealed to him, and could tell the King his dream, yet he was careful to stand clear from any filching of Gods glory from him; and therefore he answers the King, by telling him what his God could do, rather than himself. *There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets*, &c. And what makes *Daniel* so self-denying? Truly, it was, because he had obtained this secret of God, by faith at the throne of grace; as you may perceive by chap. 2. v. 15, 16, 17. compared. That faith which taught him to begge the mercy of God, enabled him to deny himself, and give the entire glory of it from himself to God. As rivers empty their streams again into the bosome of the sea, whence they at first received them; so men give the praise of what they do, unto that, by which they do it. If they attempt any enterprise with their own wit, or industry, you shall have them bring their sacrifice to their wit or ner. No wonder to hear *Nebuchadnezzar* (who looked

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no higher than himself in building his great *Babylon*) ascribe the honour of it to himself, *Dan. 4. 30. Is not this great Babylon that I have built, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my Majesty?* But faith teacheth the creature to blot out his own name, and write the Name of God in its room upon all he hath and doth. When the servants, *Luke 19. 16.* came to give up their accounts to their Lord, every one for his pound, those that were faithful to improve it, how humbly and self-denyingly do they speak? *Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds,* saith the first, *v. 16.* Thy pound hath gained five, saith another, *v. 18.* Mark, not I have gained, but thy pound hath gained ten and five. They do not applaud themselves, but ascribe both principal and increase to God; thy talent hath gained, that is, thy gifts and grace, through thy assistance and blessing, have gained thus much more. Only he that did least, comes in with a brag, and tells his Lord what he had done, *Behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.* Least doers are greatest boasters.



CHAP. VI.

*Two properties of faith, It is prayerful,
and uniform in its acting.*

TRue faith is prayerful; prayer it is the child of faith; and as the child bears his fathers name upon him, so doth prayer the name of faith; what is it known by, but by *the prayer of faith, James 5. 15.* Prayer, it is the very natural breath of faith; supplication and thanksgiving (the two parts of prayer) by these (as the body, by the double motion of the lungs) doth the Christian suck in mercy from God, and breath back again that mercy in praise to God; but without faith, he could do neither; he could not by

by supplication draw mercy from God ; for *he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, Heb. 11. 6. Neither could he return praises to God without faith. *David's* heart must be fixt, before he can sing and give thanks. Thanksgiving is an act of self-denial, and 'tis faith alone that will shew us the way out of our own doors ; and as the creature cannot pray (I mean acceptably) without faith, so with faith he cannot but pray. The new creature (like our infants in their natural birth) comes crying into the world : And therefore Christ tells it for great news to *Ananias of Saul* (a new-born believer) *behold he prays*. But is that so strange, that one brought up at the foot of *Gamaliel*, and so precise a *Pharisee* as he was, should be found upon his knees at prayer ? Truly no, it was that his Sect gloried in, their fasting and praying ; and therefore he being strict in this way, was (no doubt) acquainted with this work as to the exterior part of it ; but he never had the Spirit of prayer, till he now had the Spirit of grace, whereby he believed on Jesus Christ. And therefore if you will try your faith, it must not be by bare praying, but by some peculiar Characters, which faith imprints prayer withal.

Psalms 56.

Now there are three acts by which faith discovers it self, in reference to this duty of prayer.

First, it puts forth an exciting act, whereby it stirs up the Christian to pray.

Secondly, an assisting act in prayer.

Thirdly, a supporting act after prayer.

1.

2.

3.

SECT. I.

First, faith puts forth an exciting act, whereby it provokes the Christian, and strongly presseth him to pray. And this it doth, first, by discovering to the creature its one beggary and want, as also the fulness that is to be had from God in Christ for his supply ; both which faith useth as powerful motives to quicken the soul up to pray. As the *Levites* said to one another, *why sit we here untill we dye? if we say we will enter into the City, there is famine to slay us ; come let us fall into the Host of the Syrians*. Thus faith

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faith rouseth the soul up to prayer; If thou stayest at thy own door, O my soul, thou art sure to starve and dye; what seeest thou in thy self, but hunger and famine? no bread there, no money to buy any in thy own purse; Up therefore, haste thee to thy God, and thy soul shall live. O Sirs, are you prest with this inward feeling of your own wants? press to the Throne of grace as the only way left for your supply; you may hope it is faith that sends you; faith is the principle of our new life. *I live (saith Paul) by the faith of the Son of God, Gal. 2. 20.* This life being weak, is craving and crying for nourishment, and that naturally as the new-born babe doth for the milk; if therefore you find this inward sense prompting and provoking of you to cry to God, it shews this principle of life (saith I mean) is in thee.

Object.

Object. But may not an unbeliever pray in the sense of his wants, and be inwardly pinched with them, which may make him pray very feelingly?

Answer.

Answer. We must distinguish of wants. They are either spiritual or carnal. It cannot be denied but an unbeliever may be very sensible of outward carnal wants, and knock loud at heaven-gate for supply. We find them *howling on their beds, and assembling themselves for corn and wine, Hosea 7. 14.* There is the cry of the creature, and the cry of the new creature. Every creature hath a natural cry for that which suits their nature. Hence *Psal. 104. 7. The young Lyons roar after their prey, and seek their meat of God.* But give the Lyon flesh, and he will not roar for want of grasse; give the Oxe grasse, and you shall not hear him lowing for flesh; so give the faithlesse graceles person his fill of his carnal food, sensual enjoyments, and you shall have little complaints of spiritual wants from him. They are therefore spiritual wants you must try your faith by; if thou canst heartily pray for love to Christ, faith on him, or any other grace, feeling the want of them as a hungry man doth of his food; thou may'st conclude safely there is this principle of new life, which (like the veins at the bottome of the stomach) by its sucking puts thee to pain till it be heard and satisfied; for these graces being proper to the new creature, can be truly desired of none but one that is a new creature.

Secondly, faith excites to prayer from an inward delight it hath in communion with God: *It is good for me (saith the Psalmist) to draw*

draw near to God; now mark the next words, *I have put my trust in the Lord*, Psal. 73. 28. We take delight to be often looking, where we have laid up our treasure. This holy man had laid up his soul, and all he had in God by faith, to be kept safely for him; and now he delights oft to be with God, he hath that which invires him into his presence with sweet content. By faith the soul is contracted to Christ; Now being espoused to Christ, there is no wonder at all that it should desire communion with him. And prayer being the place of meeting, where Christ and the soul can come the nearest on this side heaven, therefore the believer is seen so oft walking that way. Canst thou say poor soul, that this is thy errand, when praying, to see the face of God? can nothing less, and need'st thou nothing more to satisfy and recreate thy soul in prayer, than communion with God? certainly God hath thy faith, or else thou couldst not so freely bestow thy love on him, and take delight in him.

SECT. II.

Secondly, faith puts forth an assisting act in prayer; to instance only in two particulars.

First, it assists the soul with importunity; faith is the wrestling grace; it comes up close to God, takes hold of God, and will not easily take a denial. It inflames all the affections, and sets them on work; this is the souls eye by which it sees the filth, the hell that is in every sin; and seeing affects the heart, and puts it into a passion of sorrow, when the soul spreads its abominations before the Lord. The creature now needs no onyon to make it weep; tears come alone freely, as water from a flowing spring. It makes a discovery of Christ to the soul, in the excellencies of his person, love and graces from the glasse of the promise; at the sight of which it is even sick with longing after them; and such pangs of love come upon it, as make it send forth strong cries and supplications for that it so impatiently desires; yea further, faith doth not barely set the creatures teeth on edge, by displaying the excellency of Christ and his grace; but it supplies him with arguments, and helps the soul to wield and use them both valiantly,

and victoriously upon the Almighty. Never could he tell what to do with a promise in prayer till now that faith teacheth him to to press God with it, humbly, yet boldly. *What wilt thou do unto thy great Name?* faith believing *Joshua, ch. 7. 9.* as if he had said, thou art so fast bound to thy people by promise and oath, that thou canst not leave them to perish, but thy Name will suffer with them; faith melts promises into arguments, as the souldier doth Lead into bullets; and then helps the Christian to send them with a force to heaven in fervent prayer; whereas a promise in an unbelievers mouth, is like a shot in a Guns mouth, without any fire to put to it. O how cold and dead doth a promise drop from him in prayer? he speaks promises, but cannot pray promises, or press promises. And therefore try thy self, not by naked praying, but by importunity in prayer; and that not by the agitation of thy bodily spirits, but the inward working of thy soul and spirit, whether carried out to plead the promise, and urge it upon God with an humble importunity or not.

Secondly, faith enables the soul to persevere in the work; false faith may shew some mettle at hand, but hee'l jade at length; *will the hypocrite pray always?* Job 27. 10. No, as the wheel wears with turning, till it breaks at last, so doth the hypocrite; he prays himself weary of praying; something or other will in time make him quarrel with that duty, which he never inwardly liked; whereas the sincere believer hath that in him, which makes it impossible he should quite give over praying, except he should also cease believing; prayer, it is the very breath of faith; stop a mans breath, and where is he then? 'tis true, the believer through his own negligence, may find some more difficulty of fetching his praying breath at one time than at another (as a man in a cold doth for his natural breath) alas, who is so careful of his souls health, that needs not bewail this? but for faith to live, and this breath of prayer to be quite cut off is impossible; we see *David* did but hold his breath a little longer than ordinary, and what a distemper it put him into, till he gave himself ease again by venting his soul in prayer; *I held my peace, and my sorrow stirred, my heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned, then spake I with my tongue, Lord make me to know my end,* Ps. 39. Dost thou O man find thy self under a necessity of praying, as the little babe who cannot choose but cry, when it ails or wants?

wants any thing, because it hath no other way to help it self, than by crying to hasten its mother or nurse to its help? the Christians wants, sins and temptations continuing to return upon him, he cannot but continue also to pray against them. *From the ends of the earth will I cry unto thee*, saith David, Psa. 61. 2. where ever I am, I'll find thee out; prison me, banish me, or do with me what thou wilt, thou shalt never be rid of me, *I will abide in thy Tabernacle for ever*, ver. 4. But how could David do that, when banish't from it? surely he means by prayer; the praying Christian carries a *Tabernacle* with him; as long as David can come at the *Tabernacle*, he will not neglect it; and when he cannot through sickness, banishment, &c. then he will look towards it, and as devoutly worship God in the open fields, as if he were in it. *Let my prayer be set before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as evening sacrifice*, Psa. 141. 2. he speaks of such a time when he could not come to offer sacrifice at the *Tabernacle*.

SECT. III.

Faith hath a supporting act after prayer. 1. It supports the soul to expect a gracious answer; *I will direct my prayers unto thee, and will look up*, Psa. 5. 3. or I will look; for what, but for a return? an unbelieving heart shoots at random, and never minds where his arrow lights, or what comes of his praying; but faith fills the soul with expectation. As a Merchant when he casts up his estate, he counts what he hath sent beyond Sea, as well as what he hath in hand; so doth faith reckon upon what he hath sent to heaven in prayer and not received, as well as those mercies which he hath received, and are in hand at present. Now this expectation which faith raiseth in the soul after prayer, appears in the power that it hath to quiet and compose the soul in the interim between the sending forth (as I may say) the ship of prayer, and its return home with its rich lading it goes for; and it is more or less according as faiths strength is; sometimes faith comes from prayer in triumph, and cries *victoria*; it gives such a being and existence to the mercy pray'd for in the Christians soul, before

fore any likelihood of it appears to sense and reason, that the Christian can silence all his troubled thoughts with the expectation of its coming. So *Hannah pray'd, and was no more sad,* 1 Sam. 1. 18. Yea, it will make the Christian disburse his praises for the mercy long before it is received. Thus high faith wrought in *David*, Plal. 56. 3, 4. *At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee*; and in the next words, ver. 4. *In God will I praise his Word*; that is, he would praise God for his promise, before there were any performance of it to him, when it had no existence but in *Gods faithfulness*, and *Dauids faith*. This holy man had such a piercing eye of faith, as he could see the promise when he was at lowest eb of misery, so certain and unquestionable in the power and truth of God, that he could then praise God, as if the promised mercy had been actually fulfilled to him. But I would not have thee, Christian, try the truth of thy faith by this heroick high strain it mounts to in some eminent believers. Thou may'it be a faithful souldier to Christ, though thou attainest not to the degree of a few Worthies in his Army, more honourable in this respect, than the rest of their brethren. There is a lower cast of faith, which if thou canst find, may certifie thee of its truth; that (I mean) which though it doth not presently disburthen the soul (upon praying) of all its anxious disquieting thoughts, yet keeps the souls head above the waves, and gives a check to them that they abate, (though by little and little) as the stream in a channel doth at a falling tyde. When God took the *Deluge* from the earth, he did not do it in a moment. It is said *the waters returned from off the earth continually*, Gen. 8. 3. That is, it was falling water from day to day, till all was gone; Canst thou not find Christian, that some of thy tumultuous disquieting thoughts are let out at the sluice of prayer, and that it is some ease to thy encombred spirit, that thou hast the bosom of a gracious God to empty thy sorrowful heart into? and though praying doth not drein away all thy fears, yet it keeps thee, doth it not, from being over-flown with them, which thou couldst not avoid without faith? a soul wholly void of faith, prays, and leaves none of its burthen with God, but carries all back with it that it brought; and more too; calling on God gives no more relief to him, than throwing out an Anchor that hath no hooks to take hold on the firm earth, doth the sinking ship.

ship. If therefore poor soul thou findest upon throwing out thy Anchor of faith in prayer that it takes such hold on Christ in the promise, as to stay thee from being driven by the fury of Satans affrighting temptations, or thy own despairing thoughts, blesse God for it. The ship that rides at Anchor is safe (though it may be a little tossed too and fro) so long as the Anchor keeps its hold. And so art thou poor soul; that faith will save from hell, that will not wholly free the soul here from fears.

SECT. IV.

True faith is uniform. As sincere obedience doth not pick and choose take this Commandment, and leave that; but hath respect to all the precepts of God; so faith unfeigned, hath respect to all the truths of God. It believes one promise as well as another. As the true Christian must not *have the faith of our Lord Jesus with respect of persons*, Jam. 2. 1. so not with respect to truths. To pretend to believe one promise, and to give no credit to another; this is to be partial in the promises, as the Priests are charg'd to be in the duties of the Law, Mal. 2. 9. The honour of God is as deeply engaged to perform one promise as another. Indeed as the breach but of one Commandment would put us under the guilt of the whole; so Gods failing in one promise (which is blasphemy to think) would be the breaking of his whole Covenant; promises are copulative as well as commands; and therefore neither can God keep one, except he perform all; nor we believe one, except we believe all. God hath spoke all these words of promises, as he did of those precepts; his seal is to all, and he looks we should compass all within the embraces of our faith. David bears witness to the whole truth of God, Psal. 119. 160. *Thy Word is true from the beginning, and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.* Try now thy faith here; possibly thou pretendest to believe the promise for pardon, and art often pleasing thy self with the thoughts of it; but what faith hast thou on the promise for sanctifying thy nature, and subduing thy corruptions?

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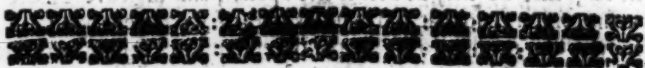
may be thou mindest not these, improvest not these; this fruit may hang long enough on the branches of the promises, before thou gatherest it; the other is for thy tooth, not these; whereas true faith would like one as well as the other. See how heartily *David* prays for the performance of this promise, *Psal* 119. 132. *Be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name; order my steps in thy Word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.* *David* would not lose any priviledge that God hath by promise setled on his children; do with me, saith he, as thou usest to do. This is no more than family fare, what thou promisest to do for all that love thee; and let not me go worse clad than the rest of my brethren. May be thou fancied, thou hast a faith for the eternal salvation of thy soul; but hast thou faith to rely on God for the things of this life? A strange believer is he not, that lives by faith for heaven, and by his wits and sinful policy for the world? *Christ* proves that they *Joh*. 5. 44. did not believe on him, because they durst not trust him with their names and credits. If we cannot trust him with the less, how can we in the greater?

I deny not, but he that hath a true faith, yea, a strong faith for heaven, may be put to a plunge, and his faith soiled about a temporal promise; but we must not from an hour of temptation, (wherein God leaves his eminentest Saints to humble them) judge of the constant ordinary frame of the believers heart. Though *Abraham* dissembled once to save his life, which he thought in some danger for his wives beauty; yet he did at other times give eminent testimony that he trusted God for his temporal life, as well as for his eternal salvation. I do not therefore bid thee question the truth of thy faith, for every fainting fit that comes over it, as to the good things of the promise for this life. A man may in a time of war, have some of his estate lye under the enemies power for a time, and he so long have no profits from it; but still he reckons it as his estate, is troubled for his present great losse, and endeavours as soon as he can, to recover it again out of his enemies hand; so in the hurry of a temptation, when Satan, the souls great enemy, is abroad, and God withdraws his assistance, the believer may have little support from some particular promise; but the believer ever counts that his portion, as well as any other, mourns he can act his faith no more upon it, and labours

bours to reinforce his faith with new strength from heaven what he can, that he may be able to live upon it, and improve it more to his comfort, so that still it holds true, if we believe not God for this life, neither do we for the other. In a word, may be thou pretendest to a faith for thy temporals, and seemest to trust God for things of this life, but art meer stranger to those prime acts of faith, whereby the believing soul closeth with Christ, and receiveth him as his Lord and Saviour, and so seals to the Covenant, that in the Gospel is tendred to poor sinners. Canst thou so far fight against thy own reason, as to think that any temporal promise belongs to thee without these? What gives the woman right to her joynture, but her marriage-covenant? And what gives the creature a true claime to these promises, or any other in the Covenant of grace, but its union to Christ, and accepting of him as he is offered? The first act of Gods love to the creature, is that whereby he chooseth such a one to be his, and sets him apart in his unchangeable purpose, to be an object of his special love in Christ, and therefore called *the foundation*, as that on which God layes the superstructure of all other mercies. *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his,* 2 Tim. 2. 19. First, God chooseth a person to be his, and on this foundation he builds, and bestows all his further cost of mercy upon the creature, as one that is his. So on the creatures part, first, faith closeth with Christ, severs him in his thoughts from all others, and chooseth him to be his Saviour, in whom alone he will trust, and whom alone he will serve; which done, then it trades with this promise and thar, as the portion which falls to him by marriage with Christ. And therefore see how preposterous thy course is who snatchest these promises to thy self, before there hath past any good-will from thee to Christ.

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CHAP.



CHAP. VII.

An Exhortation to all in a State of unbelief, to endeavour for faith, with one direction toward the attaining of it.

Use 3.

IS faith so precious a grace? Let it provoke you, who want it, to get it. Can you hear of this pearly, and not wish it were yours? wherefore hath the Spirit spoken such great and glorious things of faith in the Word, but to make it the more desirable in your eye? Is there any way to get Christ, but by getting faith? or dost not thou think that thou needest Christ as much as any other? there is a generation of men in the world, would almost make one think this was their judgement; who, because their corruptions have not (by breaking out into plague-sores of profaneness) left such a brand of ignominy upon their name, as some others lie under, but their conversations have been strowed with some flowers of morality, whereby their names have kept sweet among their neighbours, therefore they do not at all listen to the offers of Christ, neither do their consciences much check them for this neglect. And why so? surely, it is not because they are more willing to go to hell than others, for they do that to escape it, which many others will not; but because they think the way they are in, will bring them in good time to heaven, without any more ado. Poor deluded creatures! Is Christ then sent to help onely some more debauched sinners to heaven, such as drunkards swearers, and of that rank? And are civil, moral men left to walk thither on their own legges? I am sure, if the Word may be believed, we have the case resolved clear enough; That tells but of one way to heaven for all that mean to come there; As there is but *one* God, so but *one* Mediatour between

God

God and man, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. 2. 5. And if but one bridge over the gulf, judge what is like to become of the civil righteous man (for all his sweet senced life) if he misse this one bridge, and goes on in the road he hath set out in for heaven? O remember proud man who thou art, and cease thy vaine attempt. Art not thou of Adams seed? hast not thou traitours blood in thy veins? if every mouth be stopped, Rom. 5. 19, 20. how darest thou open thine? if all the world become guilty before God, that by the deeds of the Law, no flesh can be justified in his sight; where then shalt thou stand to plead thy innocency before him, who sees thy black skin under thy white feathers, thy foul heart through thy faire carriage? It is faith on Christ, that alone can purifie thy heart, without which thy washt face and hands (external righteousness I mean) will never commend thee to God. And therefore thou art under a horrible delusion, if thou dost not think that thou needest Christ, and a faith to interest thee in him as much as the bloodiest murderer, or filthiest Sodomite in the world. If a company of men and children in a journey were to wade through some brook, not beyond a mans depth, the men would have the advantage of the children; but if to crosse the sea, the men would need a ship to waite them over, as well as the children; And they might well passe for mad men, if they should think to wade through, without the help of a ship, that is offer'd them as well as the other, because they are a little taller than the rest are; such a foolish desperate adventure wouldst thou give for thy soul, if thou shouldst think to make thy way through the justice of God to heaven, without shipping thy self by faith in Christ, because thou art not so bad in thy extenal conversation as others. Let me therefore again and again beseech all that are yet destitute of faith, to endeavour for it, and that speedily. There is nothing deserves the precedence in your thoughts before this, *David resolv'd not to give sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eye-lids, till he found out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob, Psal. 132. 4, 5.* The habitation which pleaseth God most, is thy heart; but it must be a believing heart, *Ephes. 3. 17. that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith.* O how dare you sleep a night in that house where God doth not dwell? and he dwells not in thee, if thou carriest an unbelieving heart in thy bosome. There is never a

Gospel Sermon thou hearest, but he stands at thy door to be let in, take heed of multiplying unkindnesses, in denying him entertainment; how knowest thou, but God may, finding thy heart so oft shut by unbelief against his knocks, suddenly seal thee up under final unbelief?

Quest.

Quest. But possibly thou wilt ask now, how thou mayest get this precious grace of faith?

Ans.

Ans. The answer to this question, take in these following directions.

SECT. I.

I.

First, labour to get thy heart convinced of, and affected with thy unbelief: Till this be done, thou wilt be but sluggish and slighty in thy endeavours for faith. A man may be convinced of other sins, and never think of coming to Christ. Convince a drunkard of his drunkenness, and upon leaving his drunken ~~trade~~ ^{state}, his minde is pacified, yea, he blesteth himself in his reformation, because all the quarrel his conscience had with him, was for that particular sin; But, when the Spirit of God convinceth the creature of his unbelief, he gets between him and those burrows in which he did use to earth and hide himself, he hath no ease in his spirit, from those plaisters now, which formerly have relieved him, and so kept him from coming over to Christ. Before it serv'd the turn to bring his conscience to sleep, when it accused him for such a sin; that he had left the practice of it; and for the neglect of a duty, that now he had taken it up; without any enquiry into his state, whether good or bad, pardoned, or unpardoned (thus many make a shift to daub and patch the peace of their consciences, even as some do, to keep up an old rotten house, by stopping in, here a tyle, and there a stone, till a loud wind comes and blows the whole house down.) But when once the creature hath the load of its unbelief laid, upon his spirit, then, 'tis little ease to him, to think he is no drunkard as he was, no Atheist in his family, without the worship of God, as he was. Thy present state, saith the Spirit of God, is as damning, in that thou art an unbeliever, as if thou wert these still; yea, what thou wert, thou art, and wilt be found at the great day, to be the drunkard, and Atheist (for all thy seeming reformation) except by an intervening faith,

faith, thou gainest a new name; what though thou beest drunk no more, yet the guilt remains upon thee, till faith strikes it off with the blood of Christ. God will be paid his debt by thee, or Christ for thee; and Christ payes no reckoning for unbelievers.

Again, as the guilt remains, so the power of those lusts remaine, (so long as thou art an unbeliever) however they may disappear in the outward act. Thy heart is not empty'd of one sin, but the vent stopp'd by restraining grace; A bottle full of wine, close stopp'd, shewes no more what it hath in it, than one that is empty; and that is thy case, how is it possible thou shouldst truly mortifie any one lust, that hath no faith, which is the only victory of the world? In a word, if under the convincement of thy unbelief, thou wilt finde (how little a sin soever now it is thought by thee) that there is more malignity in it, than in all thy other sins. Hast thou been a liar? that is a grievous sin indeed; hell gapes for every one that loveth and telleth a lie, *Rev. 22. 15.* But know poor wretch, the loudest lie, which ever thou told'st is that, which by thy unbelief thou tellest; here, thou bearest false-witness against God himself, and tellest a lye, not to the holy Ghost, as *Ananias* did; but a lye of the holy Ghost; as if not a word were true he saith in the promises of the Gospel. If he that believes sets to his seal that God is true, judge you, whether the unbeliever makes him not a lyar? Hast thou been a murtherer, yea, had thy hand in the blood of Saints, the best of men? This is a dreadful sin, I confess; But by thy unbelief, thou art a more bloody murtherer, by how much the blood of God is more precious than the blood of meere men. Thou killest Christ over again by thy unbelief, and treadest his blood under thy feer, yea, throwest it under Sarcans feet to be trampled on by him.

SECT. II.

Quest.

Quest. But how can unbelief be so great a sin, when it is not in the sinners power to believe?

Answ.

Answ. By this reason the unregenerate person might wipe off any other sinne, and shake off the guilt of it, with but saying, It is not my fault that I do not keep this commandment or that, for I have no power of my self to do them. This is true, he cannot performe one holy action holily and acceptably; *They that are in the flesh cannot please God*, Rom. 8. 8. But, it is a false inference, that therefore he doth not sinne, because he can do no other.

First, because this inability is not created by God, but contracted by the creature himself. *God made man upright, but they sought out many inventions*, Eccles. 7. 29. Man had not his lame hand from God; No, he was made a creature fit and able for any service his Maker would please to employ him in; But man crippled himself; And mans fault cannot prejudice Gods right. Though he hath lost his ability to obey, yet God hath not lost his power to command; who among our selves thinks his debtor discharg'd, by wasting that estate, whereby he was able to have paid us? 'Tis confess'd, had man stood, he should not, indeed could not have believed on Christ for salvation, as now he is held forth in the Gospel; but this was not from any disability in man, but from the unmeetnesse of such an object to Adams holy state. If it had been a duty meet for God to command, there was ability in man to have obeyed.

Secondly, mans present impotency to yield obedience to the commands of God, and in particular to this of believing (where it is promulged) doth afford him no excuse; because it is not a simple inability, but complicated with an inward enmity against the command. 'Tis true, man cannot believe; but it is as true, man will not believe: *Ye will not come unto me, that you might have life*, John 5. 40. It is possible, yea ordinary, that a man may (through some feeblenesse and deficiency of strength) be disabled to do that which he is very willing to do, and this draws out our pity; such a one was the *poor cripple*, who lay so long at the *poole*,

John

John 5. He was willing enough to have stept down, if he could have but crept thither; or that any other should have helpt him in, if they would have been so kinde: But, what would you think of such a cruple, that can neither go himself into the poole for healing, nor is willing any should help him in, but lies in the face of him that would do him this friendly office? every unbeliever is this cruple: He is not only impotent himself, but a resister of the Holy Ghost, that comes to wooe and draw him unto Christ. Indeed, every one that believes, believes willingly, But he is beholden, not to nature, but to grace for this willingness, none are willing till the day of power comes, *Psal.* 110. 3. in which the Spirit of God overshadows the soul, and by his incubation (as once upon the waters) he new formes and moulds the will into a sweet compliance with the call of God in the Gospel.



CHAP. VIII.

Containes a second Direction for the obtaining faith.

TAKE heed of resisting or opposing the Spirit of God, when he offers his help to the work. If ever thou believest, he must enable thee; take heed of opposing him. Master-workmen love not to be controul'd. Now, two wayes the Spirit of God may be opposed. *First*, when the creature waits not on the Spirit, where he ordinarily works faith. *Secondly*, when the creature, though he attends on him in the way of means, yet controuls him in his work.

1. Take heed thou opposest not the Spirit, by not attending on him in the way and means, by which he ordinarily works faith. Thou knowest where *Jesus* useth to passe, and his Spirit breath;

breathe; and that is in the great Gospel Ordinance, the Ministry of the Word. Christs sheep ordinarily conceive when they are drinking the water of life here. The hearing of the Gospel, it is called, *Gal. 3. 2. The hearing of faith*, because by hearing the doctrine of faith, the Spirit works the grace of faith in them. This is the still voice he speaks to the souls of sinners in. *Thine eyes shall see thy Teachers, and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, Isa. 30. 20.* here are God and man teaching together. Thou canst not neglect mans teaching, but thou resistest the Spirits also. It was for something that the Apostle placed them so near, *2 Thes. 5. 19* he bids us, *quench not the Spirit*; and in the next words, *despise not prophesying*; surely he would have us know that the Spirit is dangerously quencht, when prophesying or preaching of the Gospel is despised. Now the most notorious way of despising prophesying or preaching is to turn our back off the Ordinance, and not attend on it. When God sets up the Ministry of the Word in a place, his Spirit then opens his School, and expects that all, who would be taught for heaven, should come thither; O take heed of playing the truant, and absenting thy self from the Ordinance, upon any unnecessary occasion, much lesse of casting off the Ordinance. If he tempts God, that would be kept from sinne, and yet will not keep out of the circle of the occasion, that leads to the sinne; then he tempts God as much, that would have faith, and pretends his desire is, that the Spirit should work it; but will not come within the ordinary walk of the Spirit, where he doth the work; whether is it most fitting, that the Scholar should wait on his Master at School to be taught, or that the Master should runne after his truant Scholar at play in the field to teach him there, judge you?

2. Take heed that in thy attendance on the Word, thou dost not control the Spirit in those several steps he takes in thy soul, in order to the production of faith. Though, there are no preparatory works of our own to grace; yet the holy Spirit hath his preparatory works, whereby he disposeth souls to grace. Observe therefore carefully the gradual approaches he makes by the Word to thy soul, for want of complying with him in which he may withdraw in a distaste, and leave the work at a sad stand for a time; if not quite give it over, never more to returne to it.

We read, *Acts 7. 23.* how it came into the heart of *Moses* to visit his Brethren in *Egypt* (stirr'd up, no doubt, by God himself to the journey) there he begins to shew his good will to them, and zeal for them in slaying an *Egyptian*, that had wronged an *Israelite*; which though no great matter towards their full deliverance out of *Egypt*, yet he supposed (it is said, *ver. 25.*) his brethren would have understood (by that hint) how that God would by his hand deliver them; but they did not comply with him, nay, rather opposed him; and therefore he withdrew, and they hear no more of *Moses*, or their deliverance, for forty years space, *v. 40.* Thus, may be the Spirit of God gives thee a visit in an Ordinance, directs a word that speaks to thy particular condition; he would have thee understand by this, sinner, how ready he is to help thee out of thy house of bondage, thy state of sin and wrath, if now thou wilt hearken to his counsel, and kindly entertain his motions; Carry thy self rebelliously now against him, and God knows when thou mayest hear of him again knocking at thy door upon such an errand. God makes short work with some in his judiciary proceedings; if he finds a repulse once, sometimes he departs, and leaves a dismal curse behind him as the punishment of it, *Luke 14. 24.* *I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my Supper.* They were but once invited, and for their first denial this curse clapt upon their heads. It is not said they shall never come where the Supper stands on the board, but they shall never taste. Many sit under the Ordinances, where Christ in Gospel-dishes is set forth admirably, but through the efficacy of this curse upon them, never taste of these dainties all their life; they hear precious truths, but their hearts are sealed up in unbelief, and their minds made reprobate and injudicious, that they are not moved at all by them. There is a kind of phrensie and madness (I have heard of) in which a man will discourse soberly & rationally, till you come to speak of some one particular subject that was the occasion of his distemper, and first broke his brain; here he is quite out, and presently loses his Reason, not able to speak with any understanding of it. O how many men and women are there among us, (frequent attenders on the Word) who in any matter of the world, are able to discourse very understandingly, and rationally; but when you come to speak of the things of God, Christ and

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Heaven,

Heaven, it is strange to see how soon their Reason is lost, and all understanding gone from them; they are not able to speak of these matters with any judgment! Truly I am afraid, in many (who have set long under the means, and the Spirit hath been making some attempts on them) this injudiciousness of mind in the things of God, is but the consequence of that spiritual curse, which God hath past upon them, for resisting these essays of his Spirit. I beseech you therefore, beware of opposing the Spirit; doth he beam any light from his Word into thy understanding, whereby thou (who wert before an ignorant Sor) comest to know something of the evil of sin, the excellency of Christ, and canst discourse rationally of the truths of the Scripture? Look now to it, what thou doest with this Candle of the Lord, that is lighted in thy mind; take heed thou beest not found sinning with it, or priding thy self in it, least it goes out in a snuff, and thou, for *rebelling against the light*, comest at last to dye without knowledge, as is threatned, *Job 36.12*. If the Spirit of God goes yet further, and fortifies the light in thy understanding, that it sets thy Conscience on fire with the sense of thy sins, and apprehensions of the wrath due to them; Now, take heed of resisting the holy Spirit, that in mercy to thy soul, kindles this fire in thy bosom, to keep thee out of a worse Hell, if thou wilt be ruled by him. Thou must expect, that Satan, now his House is on fire over his head, will bestir him what he can, to quench it; thy danger is, least thou shouldst listen to him for thy present ease. Take heed therefore where thou drawest thy water, with which thou quenchest this fire; that it be out of no Well, but out of the Word of God. In thinking to quiet thy Conscience, thou mayest quench the Spirit of God in thy conscience; which is the mischief, the Devil longs, thou shouldst pull upon thy own Head. There is more hope of a sick man, when his disease comes out, than when it lies at the heart, and nothing is seen outwardly; you know how Hazael helpt his Master to his sad end, who might have lived for all his disease, *2 Kings 8.15*. *He took a thick cloth, and dipt it in water, and spread it on his face so that he dyed*; and it follows, *And Hazael reigned in his Stead*. Thus the wretch came to the Crown. He saw the King like to recover, and he squatted his disease (in all probability) to his heart by the wet cloth, and so by his death made

made a way for himself to the Throne. And truly Satan will not much fear to recover the Throne of thy heart (which this present combustion in thy conscience, puts him in great fear of losing) can he but persuade thee to apply some carnal coolings to it, thereby to quench the Spirit in his convincing work. These convictions are sent thee mercifully in order to thy spiritual delivery, and they should be as welcom to thee, as the kindly bearing pains of a Woman in Travel are to her; without them she could not be delivered of her child; nor without these, more or less, can the new creature be brought forth in thy soul.

Again, May be the Spirit of God goes yet further, and doth not only dart light into thy mind, Hell-fire into thy Conscience, but Heaven-fire also into thy affections; my meaning is, He from the Word, displays Christ so in his own excellencies, and the fitness of him in all his offices to thy wants, that thy affections begin to work after him; the frequent discourses of him, and the mercy of God through him to poor sinners, are so luscious, that thou beginnest to taste some sweetness in hearing of them, which stirs up some passionate desires, whereby thou art in hearing the Word often sallying forth in such like breathings as these; O that Christ were mine, shall I ever be the happy soul, whom God will pardon and save? yea, possibly in the heat of thy affections, thou art cursing thy lusts, and Satan, who have held thee so long from Christ, and sudden purposes are taken up by thee, that thou wilt bid adieu to thy former wayes, and break through all the entreaties of thy dearest lusts, to come to Christ. O soul, now the Kingdom of God is nigh indeed unto thee. Thou art, as (I may so say) even upon thy quickning, and therefore above all, this is the chief season of thy care, least thou shouldst miscarry; if these sudden desires did but ripen into a deliberate choice of Christ; and these purposes, settle into a permanent resolution to renounce sin & self, and so thou cast thy self on Christ, I durst be the messenger to joy thee with the birth of this babe of grace (saith I mean) in thy soul. I confess affections are up and down; yea, like the wind, how strongly soever they seem to blow the soul one way at present, are often found in the quite contrary point very soon after. A man may be drunk with passion and affection, as really as with wine or beer; And,

as it is ordinary for a man to make a bargain, when he is in beer or wine, which he repents of, as soon as he is sober again; so it is as ordinary for poor creatures, who make choice of Christ and his ways in a Sermon (while their affections have been elevated above their ordinary pitch, by some moving discourse) to repent of all they have done, a while after, when the impression of the Word (which heated their affections in hearing) be worn off; and then they come to themselves again, and are what they were, as far from any such desires after Christ, as ever. Content not therefore thy self with some sudden pangs of affection in an Ordinance, but labour to preserve those impressions, which then the Spirit makes on thy soul, that they be not defaced, and rub'd off (like colours newly laid on before they are dry) by the next temptation that comes. This is the Caveat of the *Apostle*, Heb. 2.1. *Therefore we ought to give the most earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip*, or run out as leaking Vessels. May be at present, thy heart is melting, and in a flow with sorrow for thy sins, and thou thinkest, surely now I shall never give my lust a kind look more, (indeed one might wonder to see the solemn mournful countenances under a Sermon, which of these could be the man or woman, that would afterwards be seen walking hand in hand with those sins they now weep to hear mentioned.) But, as thou lovest thy life, watch thy soul, lest this prove but as the early dew, none of which is to be seen at Noon. Do thou therefore as those do, who have stood some while in a hot bath, out of which when they come, they do not presently go into the open Aire (that were enough to kill them) but betake themselves to their warm Bed, that they may nourish this kindly heat, and now while their pores are open, by a gentle sweat, breath out more effectually the remaining dregs of their distemper. Thus betake thy self to thy Closet, and there labour to take the advantage of thy present relenting frame for the more free pouring out of thy soul to God, now the Ordinance hath thawed the Tap, and with all thy soul beg of God, he would not leave thee short of faith, and suffer thee to miscarry now he hath thee upon the wheel, but make thee a Vessel unto honour, which follows as the third direction.



CHAP. IX.

Contains three Directions more towards the obtaining Faith.

3. **L**IFT up thy Cry aloud in Prayer to God for
faith.

3.

SECT. I.

Quest. But may an unbeliever pray? some think he ought not.

Quest.

Ans. This is ill news if it were true, even for some who do believe, but dare not say that they are believers. It were enough to scare them from prayer too; and so, it would be as Satan would have it; that God should have few or none to vouch him in this solemn part of his worship, for they are but the fewest of believers that can walk to the Throne of grace in view of their own faith; Prayer, it is *medium cultus*, and also *medium gratia*. A means whereby we give worship to God, and also wait to receive grace from God; so that to say, a wicked man ought not to pray, is to say, he ought not to worship God, and acknowledge him to be his Maker; And also, that he ought not to wait on the means whereby he may obtain grace, and receive faith. Prayer is the souls motion God-ward, saith Reverend Master Baxter; and to say an unbeliever (could not pray, is to say he should not turn to God; who yet saith to the wicked, Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near. Desire is the soul of prayer, (saith the same learned Author) and who dares say to the wicked, Desire not faith, desire not Christ or God? In his right method for

Ans.

peace.

peace of Conscience, pag. 63. It cannot indeed be denied, but that an unbeliever sins when he prays; but it is not his praying is his sin, but his praying unbelievingly. And therefore he sins less in praying, than in neglecting to pray; because when he prays, his sin lies but in the circumstance and manner; but when he doth not pray, then he stands in a total defiance to the duty God hath commanded him to perform, and means God hath appointed him to use for obtaining grace. I must therefore poor soul, bid thee go on for all these Bug-bears, and neglect not this grand duty, which lies upon all the sons and daughters of men; only go in the sense of thy own vileness, and take heed of carrying purposes of going on in sin with thee to the Throne of grace; this were a horrible wickedness indeed. As if a Traytor should put on the Livery which the Princes servants wear, for no other end, but to gain more easie access to his person, that he might stab him with a Dagger he hath under that Cloke. Is it not enough to sin, but wouldst thou make God accessory to his own dishonour also? By this bold enterprize thou doest what lies in thee to do it. Should this be thy temper (which God forbid) if I send thee to pray, it must be with *Peters* counsel to *Simon Magus*, Acts 8. 22. *Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* But, I suppose thee (to whom now I am directing my advice) to be of a far different complexion, one brought to some sense of thy deplored state, and so softened by the Word, that thou couldst be content to have Christ upon any terms; only thou art at a loss in thy own thoughts, how such an impotent creature, yea, impudent sinner as thou hast been, should ever come to believe on him. So that 'tis not the love of any present sin in thy heart, but the fear of thy past sins in thy conscience that keeps thee from believing. Now for thee it is, that I would gather the best encouragements I can out of the Word, and with them, shew thy way to the Throne of grace. Go poor soul to prayer for faith; I do not fear a chiding for sending such customers to Gods door. He that sends us to call sinners home unto him, cannot be angry to hear thee call upon him. He is not so throng'd with such Suicors, as that he can find in his heart to send them away with a denial, that come with this request in their mouths. Christ complains, that sinners *will not come unto him,*

him, that they may have life; and dost think, he will let any complain of him, that they desire to come, and he is unwilling they should? cheer up thy heart poor creature, and knock boldly; thou hast a friend in Gods own bosom, that will procure thy welcom. He that could without any prayer made to him, give Christ for thee, will not be unwilling now thou so earnestly prayest, to give faith unto thee. What thou prayest God to give, he commands thee to do. *This is his Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, 1 Joh. 3. 23.* So that in praying for faith, thou prayest that *his Will may be done by thee*; yea, that part of his Will, which above all he desires should be done, called therefore with an *Emphasis*, *The work of God, Joh 6. 29. This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* As if Christ had said, If ye do not this, ye do nothing for God; And surely Christ knew his Fathers mind best; O how welcom must that prayer be to God, which falls in with his chiefest design! *Joab* found his Request in the mouth of the woman of *Teckoa*, to take as he would have it; how could it do otherwise, when he ask't nothing but what the King liked better than himself did, or could? And doth it not please God more (thinkest thou, how strong soever thy desires for faith are) that a poor humbled sinner should believe, than it can do to the creature himself? Methinks by this time, thou shouldst begin to promise thy self (poor soul) a happy return of this thy adventure, which thou hast now sent to Heaven. But for thy further encouragement know, that this grace which thou so wantest and makest thy moan to God for; it is a principal part of Christs purchase. That blood, which is the price of pardon, is the price of faith also, by which poor sinners may come to have the benefit of that pardon. As he hath brought off that wrath, which mans sin had justly kindled in Gods heart against him; so he hath also, that enmity which the heart of the creature is filled with against God; and paid for a new stock of grace, wherewith his bankrupt creature may again set up; so that poor soul, when thou goest to pray for faith, look up unto Christ, as having a bank of grace lying by him, to give out to poor sinners who see they have nothing of their own to begin with, and in the sense of this their beggary, repair to him. *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for*

men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them, Psal. 68. 18. This is beyond all doubt, meant of Christ, and to him applied, Eph. 4. 8. Now observe, *First*, A bank and treasure of gifts in the hand of Christ, *Thou hast*. *Secondly*, Who entrusts him with them, and that is his Father; *Thou hast received gifts*, that is, Christ of his Father. *Thirdly*, When, or upon what considerations, doth the Father deposit this treasure into Christs hands? *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received, &c.* That is, when Christ had vanquish't sin and Satan by his death, and rode in the Triumphant Chariot of his Ascension into Heavens glorious City, then did Christ receive these gifts, as the purchase of his blood, and the payment of an old debt, which God before the foundation of the World (when the Covenant was transacted and struck) promised his Son, upon the condition of his discharging sinful mans debt, with the effusion of his own precious blood unto death. *Fourthly*, The persons for whose use Christ received these gifts; for men, not Angels, for rebellious men, not men without sin; so that poor soul, thy sinful nature and life do not make thee an excepted person, and shut thee out from receiving any of this dole. *Lastly*, Observe the nature of these gifts, and the end they are given Christ for; *That God may dwell in them, or with them*; Now nothing but faith can make a soul (that hath been rebellious) a place meet for the holy God to dwell in. This is the gift indeed he received all other gifts for, in a manner; wherefore the gifts of the Spirit and Ministry, *Apostles, Teachers, Pastors, &c.* But that by these he might work faith in the hearts of poor sinners? Let this give thee boldness (poor soul) humbly to press God for that which Christ hath paid for; say, Lord, I have been a rebellious wretch indeed, but did Christ receive nothing for such? I have an unbelieving heart, but I hear there is faith paid for in thy Covenant; Christ shed his blood, that thou might'st shed forth thy spirit on poor sinners. Dost thou think, that while thou art thus pleading with God, and using Christs Name in prayer to move him, that Christ himself can sit within hearing of all this, and not befriend thy motion to his Father? surely he is willing, that what God is indebted to him, should be paid; and therefore when thou beggest faith upon the account of his death, thou shalt find him ready to joyn issue with

with thee in the same prayer to his Father. Indeed he went to heaven on purpose, that poor returning souls might not want a friend at Court, when they come with their humble petitions thither.

SECT. II.

Fourthly, converse much with the promises, and be frequently pondering them in thy musing thoughts. It is indeed the Spirits work, and only his, to bottom thy soul upon the promise, and give his Word a being by faith in thy heart; this thou canst not do; yet as fire came down from heaven upon *Elijahs* sacrifice, when he had laid the wood in order, and gone as far as he could; so thou mayest comfortably hope that then the Spirit of God will come with spiritual light and life, to quicken the promise upon thy heart, when thou hast been conscionably diligent in meditating on the promise; if withal thou ownest God in the thing, as he did, who when he had laid all in order, lifts up his heart to God in prayer, expecting all from him, 1 *King.* 18. 36. I know no more speedy way to invite the Spirit of God into our assistance than this. As he tempts the Devil, to tempt him, that lets his eyes gaze, or his thoughts gad upon a lustful object; so he bespeaks the holy Spirits company, that lets out his thoughts upon holy heavenly objects. We need not doubt but the Spirit of God is as willing to cherish any good motion, as the infernal spirit is to nourish that which is evil. We find the *Sponse* sitting under the shadow of her beloved, as one under an Apple-tree, *Cant.* 2. 3. and presently she tells us, *his fruit was sweet to her taste*. What doth this her sitting under his shadow better signifie, than a soul sitting under the thoughts of Christ, and the precious promises that grow out of him, as branches out of a tree? Do but (O Christian) place thy self here awhile, and it were strange if the Spirit should not shake some fruit from one branch or another into thy lap. Thou knowest not, but as *Isaac* met his bride when he went into the fields to meditate, so thou mayst meet thy beloved, while walking by thy meditations in this garden of the promises.

SECT. III.

5. Lastly, press and urge thy soul home with that strong obligation that lies upon thee, a poor humbled sinner to believe. possibly God hath shamed thee in the sight of thy own conscience for other sinnes, that thou loathest the very thought of them, and durst as well run thy head into the fire, as allow thy self in them; if thou shouldst wrong thy neighbour in his person, name or estate, it would kindle a fire in thy conscience, and make thee afraid to look within doors, (converse I mean with thy own thoughts) till thou hadst repented of it; and is faith the only indifferent thing, a business left to thy own choice, whether thou wilt be so good to thy self, as to believe, or no? truly the tenderness of conscience which many humbled sinners expresse in trembling at, and smiting them for other sins, compared with the little sense they expresse for this of unbelief, speaks as if they thought they offended God in them, and only wronged themselves by this their unbelief. O how greatly art thou deceived and abused in thy own thoughts, if these be thy apprehensions? yea, if thou dost not think thou dishonourest God, and offendeest him in a more transcendent manner by thy unbelief, than by all thy other sins. What Bernard saith of a hard heart, I may say of an unbelieving heart; *Ilud cor verò durum, quod non trepidat ad nomen cordis duri*. That is a hard heart indeed, (saith he) that trembles not at the name of a hard heart. And that an unbelieving heart indeed, that trembles not at the name of an unbelieving heart; call thy self O man to the bar, and hear what thy soul hath to say for its not closing with Christ, and thou shalt then see what an unreasonable reason it will give. It must be either because thou likest not the terms, or else because thou fearest they are too good ever to be performed. Is the first of these thy reason, because thou likest not the terms on which Christ is offer'd? possibly might'st thou but have had Christ and thy lusts with him, thou wouldst have been better pleased; but to part with thy lusts to gain a Christ, this thou thinkest is a hard saying. 'Tis strange this should offend thee, which God could not have left out, and truly have loved us. Thou art a

for, a Devil, if thou dost not think thy sins the worst piece of thy misery. O what is Christ worth in thy thoughts, if thou dar'st not trust him to recompence the loss of a base lust? That man values gold little, who thinks he shall pay too dear for it by throwing the dirt or dung out of his hands (with which they are full) to receive it. Well sinner, the terms for having Christ (it seems) content thee not; ask then thy soul how the terms on which thou hold'st thy lusts like thee; canst thou (thinkest thou) better spare the blissful presence of God and Christ in hell, where thy lusts (if thou holdest of this mind) are sure enough to leave thee at last, than the company of thy lusts in heaven, whither faith in Christ would as certainly bring thee. Then take thy choice, and leave it for thy work in hell to repent of thy folly. But I should think if thou wouldst be so faithful to thy self, as to state the case right, and then seriously acquaint thy soul with it, giving it time and leisure to dwell upon it daily, that thou wouldst soon come to have better thoughts of Christ, and worse of thy sins. But may be this is not the reason that keeps thee from believing; the terms thou likest highly, but it cannot enter into thy heart to think that ever such great things as are promised, should be performed to such a one as thou art. Well, of the two it is better the rub in thy way to Christ should lye in the difficulty that thy understanding finds to conceive, than in the obstinacy of thy will not to conceive what God in Christ offers; but this must be removed also. And therefore fall to work with thy soul, and labour to bring it to reason in this particular; for indeed nothing can be more irrational, than to object against the reality and certainty of Gods promises. Two things well wrought on thy soul, would satisfy thy doubts, and scatter thy fears as to this.

First, labour to get a right notion of God in thy understanding, and it will not appear strange at all that a great God should do so great things for poor sinners; if a beggar should promise you a thousand pounds a year, you might indeed slight it, and ask where he should have it? but if a Prince should promise more, you would listen after it, because he hath an estate that bears proportion to his promise. God is not engaged for more by promise, than infinite mercy, power and faithfulness can see discharged. *Be still, and know that I am God, Psal. 46. 10.* or

this Psalm. Luther would say in times of great confusion in the Church, *Let us sing the six and forty Psalm, in spite of the Devil and all his instruments.* And this clause of it, poor humbled soul, thou mayest sing with comfort in spite of Satan and sin also, *Be still O my soul, and know that he who offers thee mercy, he is God; they that know his Name will trust in him.*

Secondly, peruse well the securities which this great God gives for the performance of his promise to the believer, and thou shalt find them so many and great, (though his bare word deserves to be taken for more than our souls are worth) that if we had the most slippery cheating companion in the world under such bonds for the paying of a sum of money, we should think it were sure enough; and wilt thou not rest satisfied, when the true and faithful God puts himself under these for thy security, whose truth is so immutable, that it is more possible for light to send forth darkness, than it is that a lye should come out of his blessed lips.

CHAP. X.

An Exhortation to Believers, above all to look to their faith, with some directions for the preserving it.

I Now turn my self to you that are believers, in a double Exhortation.

First, seeing faith is such a choice grace, be stirred up to a more than ordinary care to preserve faith. Keep that, and it will keep thee, and all thy other graces. Thou standest by faith, if that fails, thou fallest; where shalt we find thee then but under thy enemies feet? be sensible of any danger thy faith is in; like that

Gracious

Grecian Captain, who being knock't down in fight, ask't as soon as he came to himself, where his shield was. This he was solicitous for above any thing else. O be asking in this temptation, and that duty, where is thy faith, and how it fares? this is the grace which God would have us chiefly judge and value our selves by, because there is the least danger of priding in this self-emptying grace of any other, *Rom. 12. 3. I say through the grace of God given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.* There were many gifts which the *Corinthians* received from God; but he would have them think of themselves rather by their faith; and the reason is, that they may think *soberly*. Indeed all other graces are to be tryed by our faith; if they be not fruits of faith, they are of no true worth. This is the difference between a Christian and an honest Heathen. He values himself by his patience, temperance, liberality, and other moral vertues which he hath to shew above others; these he expects will commend him to God, and procure him a happiness after death; and in these he glories, and makes his boast while he lives. But the Christian he is kept sober in the sight of these, (though they commence graces in him, that were but vertues in the Heathen) because he hath a discovery of Christ, whose righteousness and holiness by faith becomes his; and he values himself by these, more than what is inherent in him. I cannot better illustrate this, than by two men; the one a *Courtier*, the other a *Countrey-man*, and a stranger to Court; both having fair estates, but the *Courtier* greatest by far. Ask the *Countrey-Gentleman* that hath no relation to Court, or place in the Princes favour, what he is worth; and hee'll tell you as much as his lands and moneys amount to; these he values himself by: but ask the *Courtier* what he is worth; and he (though he hath more land and money by far than the other) will tell you he values himself by the favour of his Prince, more than by all his other estate. I can speak a big word (saith he) what my Prince hath is mine, (except his Crown and Royalty) his purse mine to maintain me, his love to embrace me, his power to defend me. The poor Heathens being strangers to God, and his favour in Christ, they best themselves in the improvement of their natural stock, and that treasure of

moral

moral virtues which they had gathered together with their industry, and the restraint that was laid upon their corruptions by a secret hand, they were not aware of. But the believer having access by faith into this grace, wherein he stands so high in Court-favour with God by Jesus Christ, he doth and ought to value himself chiefly by his faith, rather than any other grace. Though none can shew these graces in their true heavenly beauty besides himself, yet they are not these, but Christ (who is his by faith) that he blesseth himself in. The believer he can say through mercy, that he hath a heart beautified with those heavenly graces, to which the Heathens mock-virtues, and the proud self Justiciary his mock-graces also, are no more to be compared, than the image in the glasse is to the face, or the shadow to the man himself. He can say, he hath that holiness in truth, which they have but in shew and semblance. And this grace of God in him, he values infinitely above all the worlds treasure or pleasure; he had rather be the ragged Saint, than robed sinner; yea, above his natural life, which he can be willing to lose, and count himself no loser, may he thereby but secure this his spiritual life. But this is not the biggest word that a believer can say; he is not only partaker of the divine nature by that principle of holiness infused to him; but he is heir to all the holiness, yea, all the glorious perfections that are in God himself. All that God is, hath or doth, he hath leave to call his own. God is pleased to be called his peoples God. *The God of Israel*, 2 Sam. 23.3. As a mans house and land bears the owners name upon it; so God is graciously pleased to carry his peoples name on him; that all the world may know who are they he belongs to. *Naboths field is called the portion of Naboth*, 2 Kings 9. 21. so *God is called the portion of Jacob*, Jer. 10. 16. Nothing hath God kept from his people (saving his Crown and glory; that indeed he will not give to another, Isa. 42. 8.) if the Christian wants strength, God would have him make use of his; and that he may do it boldly and confidently, the Lord calls himself his peoples strength, 1 Sam. 15. 29. *The strength of Israel will not lie*. If it is righteousness and holiness he is scant in? behold where it is brought unto his hand; *Christ is made unto us righteousness*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. called therefore *the Lord our righteousness*, Jer. 33.16, is it love and mercy they would have? All the mercy in God

God is at their service, *Psal. 31. 19. O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!* Mark the phrase, *laid up for them*; his mercy and goodness it is intended for them; as a father that layes by such a summe of money, and writes on the bag, this is a portion for such a child. But how comes the Christian to have this right to God, and all that vast and untold treasure of happinesse which is in him? This indeed is greatly to be heeded; it is faith that gives him a good title unto all this. That which maketh him a child, makes him an heir. Now faith makes him a child of God, *Joh. 1. 12. To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on him.* As therefore if you would not call your birth-right into question, and bring your interest in Christ, and those glorious priviledges that come along with him, under a sad dispute in your souls, look to your faith.

Quest. But what counsel (may the Christian say) can you give for the preserving of my faith?

Ans. To this I answer in these following particulars.

1. That which was instrumental to beget thy faith, will be helpful to preserve thy faith, I mean the Word of God. As it was seed for the former purpose in thy conversion, so now it is milk for the present sustentation of thy faith; lye sucking at this breast, and that often. Children cannot suck long, nor digest much at a time, and therefore need the more frequent returns of their meals; such children are all believers in this world; *precept must be upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little*; The breast often drawn out for the nourishing of them up in their spiritual life, or else they cannot subsist. It was not ordinary that *Moses* should look so well as he did, after he had fasted so long, *Exod. 34.* And truly it is a miraculous faith they must have, who will undertake to keep their faith alive, without taking any spiritual repast from the Word. I have heard of some children that have been taken from their mothers breast as soon almost as born, and brought up by hand, who yet have done well for their natural life; but I shall not believe that a creature can thrive in his spiritual life, who casts off Ordinances, and weans himself from the Word, till I hear of some other way of provision, that

Quest.

Ans.

1.

that God hath made for the ordinary maintainance of it besides this; and I despair of living so long as to see this proved. I know some (that we may hope well of) have been for a time perswaded to turn their backs on the Word and Ordinances; but they have return'd well hunger-bic to their old fare again; yea, with *Naomi* her bitter complaint in their mouths, *I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty*, Ruth 1. 21. And happy for them that they are come to their stomacks in this life, before this food be taken off the table, never more to be set on. He that taught Christians to pray for their daily bread, did suppose they had need of it; and surely he did not mean only or chiefly corporal bread, who in the same Chapter bids them *seek first the Kingdom of God*, Mat. 6. 3. 3. Well Christian, prize thou the Word, feed favourly on the Word, whether it be, dish't forth in a Sermon at the publick, or in a conference with some Christian friend in private, or in a more secret duty of reading and meditation by thy solitary self. Let none of these be disused, or carnally used by thee; and with Gods blessing thou shalt reap the benefit of it in thy faith; when thy stomack fails to the Word, thy faith must needs begin to fail on the Word. O that Christians, who are so much in complaints of their weak faith, would but turn their complaints into enquiries, why it is so weak and declining? Is it not because faith hath mist its wonted meals from the Word? Thou haply hast formerly broke through many straits to keep thy acquaintance with God in his Word, and wert well paid for that time which thou didst borrow of thy other occasions for this end, by that sweet temper then thou foundest thy heart in, to trust God, and rely upon him in all conditions; but now since thou hast discontinued thy acquaintance with God in those his Ordinances, thou perceivest a sad change; where thou couldst have trusted God, now thou art suspicious of him; those promises that were able in a mutiny and hubbub of thy unruly passions to have hush'd and quieted all in thy soul at their appearing in thy thoughts, have now alas but little authority over thy murmuring unbelieving heart, to keep it in any tolerable order; if it be thus with thee poor soul, thy case is sad, and I cannot give thee better counsel for thy soul, than that which Physicians give men in a consumption, for their bodies. They ask them where they were born and bred up; and to that their native aire they lend them, as the

the best means to recover them. Thus soul, let me ask thee, if thou ever hadst faith, where was it born and bred up? was it not in the sweet Aire of Ordinances, hearing, meditating, conferring of the Word, and praying over the Word? Go poor creature, and get thee as fast as thou canst into thy native Aire, where thou didst draw thy first Christian breath, and where thy faith did so thrive and grow for a time. No means more hopeful to set thy feeble faith on its legs again, than this.

2. Wouldst thou preserve thy faith, look to thy Conscience. A good conscience is the bottom faith sails in; if the conscience be wrackt, how can it be thought that faith should be safe? If faith be the Jewel, a good conscience is the Cabinet, in which it is kept. And if the Cabinet be broken, the Jewel must needs be in danger of losing. Now you know, what sin waite the conscience; sins either deliberately committed, or impenitently continued in.

O take heed of deliberate sins, like a stone thrown into a clear stream, they will so royle thy soul, and muddy it, that thou, who even now couldst see thy interest in the promise, wilt now be at a loss, and not know what to think of thy self. They are like a fire on the top of the house, it will be no easie matter to quench it. But if thou hast been so unhappy, as to fall into such a slough, take heed of lying in it by impenitency; the sheep may fall into a Ditch, but it is the swine that wallows in it, and therefore, how hard wilt thou find it (thinkst thou) to aſt thy faith on the promise, when thou art by thy filthy garments, and besmeared countenance; so unlike one of Gods holy ones? It is dangerous to drink poyson, but far more, to let it lie in the body long. Thou canst not aſt thy faith (though a believer) on the promise, so as to apply the pardon it presents to thy soul, till thou hast renewed thy Repentance.

3. Exercise thy faith, if thou meanest to preserve thy faith. We live by faith, and faith lives by exercise. As we say of some stirring men; they are never well, but at work; confine them to their bed or chair, and you kill them; so here, hinder faith from working, and you are enemies to the very life and being of it. Why do we aſt faith so little in prayer, but because we are no more frequent in it? Let the child seldom see its father or mother, and

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when he comes into their presence, he will not make much after them. Why are we no more able to live on a promise, when at a plunge surely, because we live no more with the promise. The more we converse with the promise, the more confidence we shall put in it. We do not trust strangers, as we do our Neighbours, in whose company we are almost every day. It were a rare way to secure our faith, yea, to advance it, and all our other graces, would we in our daily course, labour to do all our actions, as in obedience to the command, so in faith on the promise. But alas, how many enterprizes are undertaken, where faith is not called in, nor the promise consulted with from one end of the business to the other? And therefore, when we would make use of faith in some particular strait, wherein, we think our selves to be more than ordinary at a loss, our faith it self is at a loss, and to seek, like a servant, who, because his Master very seldom employes him, makes bold to be gadding abroad, and so when his Master doth call him upon some extraordinary occasion, he is out of the way, and not to be found. O Christian, take heed of letting your faith be long out of work; if you do not use it when you ought, it may fail you, when you desire most to act it.

4.

Fourthly, Take special notice of that unbelief which yet remains in thee, and as it is putting forth daily its head in thy Christian course, be sure thou loadest thy soul with the sense of it, and deeply humblest thy self before God for it. What thy faith loseth by every act of unbelief, it recovers again by renewing thy repentance. *David's faith was on the mending hand, when he could shame himself heartily for his unbelief, Psal. 73. 22. He confesseth how foolish and ignorant he was; yea, faith he, I was a beast before thee; so irrational and brutish his unbelieving thoughts now appeared to him. And by this ingenuous humble confession, the malignity of his distemper breaths out, that he is presently in his old temper again, & his faith is able to act as high as ever. Thou hast holden me by my right hand, Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and after receive me to glory, ver. 23, 24.* But, so long, thy unbelief is sure to grow upon thee, as thou beest unhumbled for it. We have the reason why the people of *Laiſh* were so bad, *Judges 18. 7. There was no Magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing. Christian, thou hast a Magistrate.*

Magistrate in thy bosom commissioned by God himself, to check, reprove and shame thee, when thou sinnest: Indeed all things go to wrack in that soul, where this doth not offic; hear therefore what this hath to charge thee with, that thou mayst be ashamed; There is no sin dishonours God more than unbelief, and this Sword cuts his Name deepest, when in the hand of a Saint. O, to be wounded in the house of his friends, this goes near the tender heart of God. And there is Reason enough, why God should take this sin so unkindly at a Saints hand, if we consider the near Relation such a one stands in to God. It would grieve an indulgent father, to see his own child come in to Court, and there bear witness against him, and charge him of some untruth in his words, more than if a stranger should do it; Because, the testimony of a child, though when it is for the vindication of a Parent may lose some credit in the opinion of those that hear it, upon the suspicion of partiality; yet when against a Parent, it seems to carry some more probability of truth, than what another that is a stranger says against him; Because the band of natural affection with which the child is bound to his Parent, is so sacred, that it will not be easily suspected; he can offer violence to it, but upon the more inviolable necessity of bearing witness to the truth. O think of this (Christian) again and again; by thy unbelief thou bearest false witness against God; And if thou, a child of God, speakest no better of thy heavenly Father, and presentest him in no fairer character to the World; it will be no wonder if they be confirm'd in their hard thoughts of God, even to final impenitency and unbelief, when they shall see how little credit he finds with thee, for all thy great profession of him, and near Relation to him; When we would sink the Reputation of a man, the lowest possible, we cannot think of an expression, that will do it more effectually, than to say, He is such a one, as those that are nearest to him, even his own children dare not trust him, or will not give him a good word. O Christian, ask thy self, whether thou couldst be willing to be the unhappy instrument to defame God, and take away his good name in the World; certainly thy heart trembles at the thought of it, if a Saint; and if it doth, then surely thy unbelief, by which thou hast done this so oft, will wound thee to the very heart; and bleeding for what thou hast done, thou wilt beware of taking

that Sword into thy hand again, with which thou hast given so many a wound to the Name of God, and thy own peace.

Fifthly, If thou wouldst preserve thy faith, labour to encrease thy faith. None in more danger of losing what they have, than those poor-spirited men, who are content with what they have. A spark is sooner smothered than a flame; a drop easilier drunk up and dried, than a River. The stronger thy faith is, the safer thy faith is from the enemies assaults. The intelligence which an enemy hath of a Castle, being weakly provided for a siege, is enough to bring him against it, which else should not have been troubled with his company. The Devil is a Coward, and he loves to fight on the greatest advantage, & greater he cannot have, than the weakness of the Christians faith; didst thou but know (Christian) the many priviledges of a strong faith above a weak, thou wouldst never rest till thou hadst it. Strong faith comes Conqueror out of those temptations, where weak faith is foyled and taken prisoner. Those *Philistims* could not stand before *Samson* in his strength, who durst dance about him scornfully in his weakness. When *Dauids* faith was up, how undauntedly did he look death in the face? *1 Sam. 30. 6.* But, when that was out of heart, O how poor, if it ted is he, ready to run his head into every hole, though never so dishonourably, to save himself? *1 Sam. 31. 13.* Strong faith, it frees the Christian from those heart-rending thoughts, which weak faith must needs be oppressed with. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee,* *Esay 26. 3.* So much faith, so much inward peace and quietness. If little faith, then little peace and serenity, through the storms that our unbelieving fears will necessarily gather. If strong faith, then strong peace, for so the ingemination in the *Hebr. Peace, pæce,* imports. 'Tis confess, weak faith hath as much peace with God through Christ, as the other hath by his strong faith, but not so much bosom-peace. Weak faith will as surely land the Christian in Heaven as strong faith; for it is impossible the least dram of true grace should perish, being all incorruptible seed; But the weak doubting Christian is not like to have so pleasant a Voyage thither, as another with strong faith. Though all in the ship come safe to shoar, yet he that is all the way Seasick, hath not so comfortable a Voyage, as he that is strong and healthful. There are many delightful prospects occur in a journey, which

which he that is sick and weak loseth the pleasure of; but the strong man views all with abundance of delight; and, though he witheth with all his heart, he was at home, yet the entertainment he hath from these, do much shorten and sweeten his way to him. Thus Christian, there are many previous delights, which Saints travelling to Heaven meet on their way thither (besides what God hath for them at their journeys end.) But, it is the Christian, whose faith is strong and active on the promise, that finds them. This is he, who sees those spiritual glories in the promise, that ravish his soul with unspeakable delight, while the doubting Christians eye of faith, is so gumm'd up with unbelieving fears, that he can see little to affect him in it. This is he, that goes singing all the way with the promise in his eye; while the weak Christian (kept in continual pain with his own doubts and jealousies) goes sighing and mourning with an heavy heart, because his interest in the promise is yet under a dispute in his own thoughts. As you would not therefore live uncomfortably, and have a dull melancholly walk of, it to Heaven, labour to strengthen your faith.

Quest. But, may be, you will ask, how may I know whether my faith be strong or weak?

Quest.

Ans. I answer, by these following Characters.

Ans.

I.

First, The more entirely the Christian can rely on God, upon his naked word in the promise, the stronger his faith is. He surely putteth greater confidence in a man, that will take his own word, or single bond for a sum of money, than he, who dares not, except some others will be bound for him. When we trust God for his bare promise, we trust him on his own credit, and this is faith indeed. He that walks without staff or crutch, is stronger than he that needs these to lean on. The promise is the ground faith goes on; sense and reason, these are the crutches which weak faith leans on too much in its acting. Now soul, enquire, *First*, Canst thou bear up thy self on the promise, though the crutch of sense and present feeling be not at hand? May be thou hast had some discoveries of Gods love, and beamings forth of his favour upon thee, and so long as the Sun shined thus in at thy window, thy heart was lightsom, and thou thoughtst thou shouldst never distrust God more, or listen to thy unbelieving thoughts more; but how findest thou thy heart now, since those sensible demor-

strations.

strations are withdrawn, and may be some frowning Providence sent in the room of them? dost thou presently dispute the promise in thy thoughts, as not knowing whether thou mayst venture to cast Anchor on it or no? Because thou hast lost the sense of his love, does thy eye of faith fail thee also, that thou hast lost the sight of his mercy and truth in the promise? surely the eye of faith is weak, or else it would read the promise without these spectacles. The little child indeed thinks the mother is quite lost, if she goes but out of the Room where he is; but as it grows older, so he will be wiser, And truly so will the Believer also. Christian, bless God for the experiences and sensible tastes thou hast at any time of his love; but know, that we cannot judge of our faith, whether weak or strong by them. Experiences (*Parisensis*) are like Crutches, which do indeed help a lame man to go, but they do not make the lame man sound or strong, food and physick must do that. And therefore Christian, labour to lean more on the promise, and less on sensible expressions of Gods love, whether it be in the present feeling, or past experiences of it. I would not take you off from improving these, but leaning on these, and limiting the actings of our faith to these. A strong man, though he doth not lean on his staffe all the way he goes, as the lame man doth on his Crutch (which bears his whole weight) yet he may make good use of it now and then, to defend himself, when set upon by a thief or dog in his way. Thus the strong Christian may make good use of his experiences, in some temptations, though he doth not lay the weight of his faith upon them, but the promise. Canst thou, *Secondly*, Bear thy self upon the promise, when the other Crutch of Reason breaks under thee, or does thy faith even fall to the ground with it? That is a strong faith indeed, that can trample upon the improbabilities and impossibilities, which Reason would be objecting against the performance of the promise, & gives credit to the truth of it with a *non obstante*. Thus *Noah* fell hard to work about the Ark, upon the credit he gave both to the threatening & promissory part of Gods Word, & never troubled his head to clear the matter to his Reason, how these strange things could come to pass. And it is imputed to the strength of *Abrahams* faith, that he would not suffer his own narrow Reason to have the hearing of the business, when God promised him a *Michaëlas Spring* (as I may so say)

a son in his old age. *Rom. 4. 19. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, that was now dead; and skilful swimmers are not afraid to go above their depth, whereas young learners feel for the ground, and are loth to go far from the bank-side. Strong faith fears not, when God carries the creature beyond the depth of his Reason: We know not what to do, (saith good Jehoshaphat) but our eyes are upon thee, 2 Chron. 20. As if he had said, we are in a Sea of troubles, beyond our own help, or any thought, how we can wind out of these straits, but our eyes are upon thee, we dare not give our case for desperate, so long as there is strength in thine arm, tenderness in thy bowels, and truth in thy promise. Whereas weak faith, that is groping for some footing for Reason to stand on, it is taken up, how to reconcile the promise and the creatures understanding; hence those many questions which drop from its mouth. When Christ said, Give ye them to eat, Mark 6. His Disciples ask him Shall we go and buy two hundred penniworth of bread? As if Christs bare Word could not spare that cost and trouble. Whereby shall I know this (saith Zacharias to the Angel) for I am an old man? Luke 1. Alas, his faith was not strong enough to digest, at present, this strange news.*

Secondly, The more composed and contented the heart is under the changes, which Providence brings upon the Christians state and condition in the world, the stronger his faith is; weak bodies cannot bear change of weather, so well, as healthful and strong do; hot and cold, fair or foul, cause no great alteration in the strong mans temper; but alas, the other is laid up by them, or at best, goes complaining of them. Thus strong faith, can live in any Climate, travel in all weather, and sadge with any condition. *I have learnt in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content, saith Paul, Phil. 4. 11. Alas, all Christs Scholars are not of Pauls form; weak faith hath not yet got the mastery of this hard lesson. When God turns thy health into sickness, thy abundance into penury, thy honour into scorn and contempt; in what language dost thou now make thy condition known to God? Is thy spirit embittered into discontent, which thou ventest in murmuring complaints? or art thou well satisfied with Gods dealings, so as to acquiesce chearfully in thy present portion, not from an unsensibleness of the affliction, but approbation*

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of divine appointment ? if the latter, thy faith is strong. First, It shews God hath a Throne in thy heart ; thou reverencest his Authority, and ownest his Sovereignty, or else thou wouldst not acquiesce in his orders. *I was dumb because thou didst it, Psal. 39.9.* If the blow had come from any other hand, he could not have taken it so silently. When the servant strikes the child, he runs to his father, and makes his complaint ; but though the father doth more to him, he complains not of his father, nor seeks redress from any other ; because it is his father, whose authority he reveres. Thus, thou compest thy self toward God, and what, but a strong faith, can enable thee ? *Be still, and know that I am God, Psal. 46.11.* We must know God believingly, to be what he is, before our hearts will be still. Secondly, This acquiescence of spirit, under the disposition of Providence, shews that thou dost not only stand in awe of his sovereignty, but hast amiable comfortable thoughts of his mercy and goodness in Christ. Thou believest he can soon, and will certainly make thee amends, or else thou couldst not so easily part with these enjoyments. The child goes willingly to bed, when others may be, are going to Supper at a great feast in the family ; but the mother promiseth the child ; to save something for him again the morning ; this the child believes, and is content. Surely, thou hast something in the eye of thy faith, which will recompence all thy present loss, and this makes thee fast so willingly, when others feast, be sick, when others are well. *Paul* tells us, why he and his Brethren in affliction did not faint, *2 Cor. 14. 16.* They saw Heaven coming to them, while Earth was going from them. *For which cause we faint not, — for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

3. Thirdly, The more able to wait long for answer to our desires and prayers, the stronger faith is. It shews the Tradesman to be poor & needy, when he must have ready money for what he sells. They that are fore-handed, are willing to give time, and able to forbear long. Weak faith is all for the present ; if it hath not presently its desires answer'd, then it grows jealous, layes down sad conclusions against it self, his prayer was not heard, or he is not one God loves, and the like ; much ado to be kept out of a fainting fit. *I said in my haste, all men are liars ;* but strong faith,

faith, that can trade with God for time, yea, wait Gods leisure, *he that believes makes not haste*, *Ma. 28. 16.* He knows his money is in a good hand, and he is not over-quick to call for it home, knowing well, that the longest voyages have the richest returns. As rich lusty ground can forbear rain longer, than lean or sandy, which must have a shower ever and anon, or the corne on it fades; or as a strong healthful man, can fast longer without faintnesse, than the sickly and weak: so the Christian of strong faith, can stay longer for spiritual refreshing from the presence of the Lord, in the returns of his mercy, and discoveries of his love to him, than one of weak faith.

Fourthly, the more the Christian can lose or suffer upon the credit of the promise, the stronger his faith is; if you should see a man part with a faire inheritance, and leave his kindred and country, where he might passe his days in the embracements of his dear friends, and the delicious fate, which a plentiful estate would afford him every day, to follow a friend to the other end of the world, with hunger and hardship; through sea and land, and a thousand perils that meet him on every hand, you would say, that this man had a strong confidence of his friend, and a dear love to him, would you not? Nay, if he should do all this for a friend, whom he never saw, upon the bare credit of a letter, which he sends to invite him to come over to him, with a promise of great things that he will do for him; now to throw all his present possessions and enjoyments at his heels, and willingly put himself into the condition of a poor Pilgrim and Traveller (with the losse of all he hath) that he may come to his dear friend, this adds to the wonder of his confidence. Such gallant spirits we read of, *1 Pet. 1. 6, 7, 8.* *Whom having not seen, ye love, in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoyce, &c.* observe the place, and you shall finde them in sorrowful plight, in heavinesse through manifold temptations; yet, because their way lies through the sloughs, to the enjoyment of God and Christ (whom they never saw or knew, but by the report the word makes of them) they can turne their back off the worlds friendship and enjoyments, (with which it courted them as well as others) and go with a merry heart through the deepest of them all; here is glorious faith indeed. It is not praising of heaven, and wishing we were thee, but a cheerful abandoning the dearest

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pleasures, and embracing the greatest sufferings of the world (when called to the same) will evidence our faith to be both true and strong.

5.

Fifthly, the more easily that the Christian can repel motions, and resist temptations to sinne, the stronger is his faith. The snare or net which holds the little fish fast. The greater and stronger fish easily breaks thorough. The Christians faith is strong or weak, as he finds it easie or hard to break from temptations to sinne; when an ordinary temptation holds thee by the heel, and thou art entangled in it, like a flie in the spiders web, much ado to get off, and perswade thy heart from yielding: truly it speaks faith very feeble: to have no strength to oppose the assaults of sinne and lust, speaks the heart void of faith; where faith hath not a hand to prostrate an enemy, it yet hath a hand to lift up against it, and a voice to cry out for help to heaven; some way or other faith will shew its dislike, and enter its protest against sinne; And to have little strength to resist, evidenceth a weak faith. *Peters* faith was weak, when a maids voice dasht him out of countenance, but it was well amended, when he could withstand, and with a noble constancy disd in threats of a whole counsel, *Acts* 14. 17. Christian, compare thy self with thy self, and give righteous judgement on thy self: Do now thy lusts as powerfully inveigle thy heart, and carry it away from God as they did some months or years ago? or canst thou in truth say, thy heart is got above them, since thou hast known more of Christ, and had a view of his spiritual glories, thou canst now passe by their door and not look in, yea, when they knock at thy door in a temptation, thou canst shut it upon them, and disdaine the motion? surely thou mayest know thy faith is grown stronger. When we see that the cloaths, which a year or two ago were even fit for the person, will not now come on him (they are so little) we may easily be perswaded to believe the person is much grown since that time. If thy faith were no more grown, those temptations, which fitted thee then, would like thee as well now; sinde but the power of sinne die, and thou mayest know that faith is more lively and vigorous. The harder the blow, the stronger the arme is that gives it. A childe cannot strike such a blow as a man. Weak faith cannot give such a home blow to sin as a strong faith can.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, the more ingenuity and love is in thy obediential walking, the stronger thy faith is. Faith works by love, and therefore its strength or weaknesse may be discovered by the strength or weaknesse of that love it puts forth in the Christians actings. The strength of a mans arm, that drawes a bowe, is seen by the force the arrow which hee shoots flies with. And certainly, the strength of our faith may be known, by the force that our love mounts to God with. It is impossible, that weak faith (which is unable to draw the promise as a strong faith can) should leave such a forcible impression on the heart to love God, as the stronger faith doth. If therefore thy heart be strongly carried out from love to God, to abandon sinne, perform duty, and exert acts of obedience to his command; know thy place, and take it with humble thankfulness, thou art a graduate in the Art of believing. The Christians love advanceth by equal paces with his faith; as the heat of the day encreaseth with the climbing Sunne; the higher that mounts towards its *Meridian*, the hotter the day grows. So, the higher faith lifts Christ up in the Christian, the more intense his love to Christ grows, which now sets him on work after another sort, than hee was wont. Before, when hee was to mourn for his sinnes, hee was acted by a slavish fear, and made an ugly face at the work, as one doth that drinks some unpleasing potion; but now acts of repentance are not distastefull and formidable, since faith hath discovered mercy to sit on Justices brow, and undeceived the creature of those false and cruel thoughts of God, which ignorantly hee had taken up concerning him. Hee doth not now *hate the word Repentance*; (as *Luther* said hee once did, before he understood that place, *Rom. 1. 17.*) but goes about the work with amiable sweet apprehensions of a good God, that stands ready with the sponge of his mercy, dipt in Christs blood, to blot out his sinnes; as fast as he scores them up by his humble sorrowful confession of them. And the same might be said concerning all other offices of Christian piety; strong faith makes the soul ingenuous, it doth not pay the performance of any duty, as an oppressed subject doth an heavy tax, with a deep sigh, to think how much hee parts with, but as freely as a childe would present his father with an apple of that orchard, which hee holds by gift from him; indeed the childe, when young, is much servile and selfish, forbearing what his father forbids, for fear of

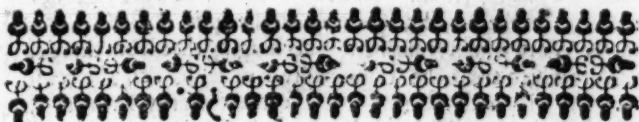
the rod, and doing what hee commands, for some fine thing or other, that his father bribes him with, more than for pure love to his person, or obedience to his will and pleasure: But as hee grows up and comes to understand himself better, and the relation hee stands in, with the many obligations of it to filial obedience, then his servility and selfishness wears off, and his *sogyn*, or natural affection, will prevail more with him to please his father, than any other argument what ever. And so will it with the Christian, where faith is of any growth and ripeness.

7.

Seventhly, to name no more, The more able faith is to sweeten the thoughts of death, and make it desirable to the Christian, the stronger his faith. Things that are very sharp or sowre, will take much sugar to make them sweet. Death is one of those things, which hath the most ungrateful taste to the creatures palate, that can be. O it requires a strong faith to make the serious thoughts of it sweet and desirable. I know some in a pet and passion, have profest great desires of dying, but it hath been, as a sick man desires to change his place, meerly out of a weariness of, and discontent with his present condition, without any due consideration of what they desire. But a soul, that knows the consequences of death, and the unchangeableness of that state (whether of bliss or misery) that it certainly *carries* us to, will never cheerfully call for death in his cordial desires, till hee be in some measure resolv'd from the promise, what entertainment he may expect from God, when he comes into that other world; And that a weak faith will not do, without abundance of fears and doubts. I confess, that sometime a Christian of very weak faith may meet death with as little fear upon his spirit, yea, more joy, than one of a far stronger faith, when hee is held up by the chin, by some extraordinary comfort poured into his soul from God immediately; which should God with-draw, his fears would return upon him, and he feel again his faintings, as a sick-man that hath been strangely cheer'd with a strong cordial, does his feebleness, when the efficacy of it is spent: But wee speak of the ordinary way how Christians come to have their hearts raised above the fear, yea, into a strong desire of death, and that is by attaining to a strong faith. God can indeed make a feast of a few loaves, and multiply the weak Christians little faith on a sudden, as he lies on a sick bed, into a spread table of all varieties of consolations, but I fear that God

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will not do this miracle for that man or woman, who upon the expectation of this, contents himself with the little provision of faith he hath, and labours not to encrease his store against that spending time.



CHAP. XI.

Sheweth, it is the duty of a Christian to own the grace of God in him, and not deny it; with the resolution of some scruples, with which weak Saints dispute against the truth of their own faith.

WE come to the second word of exhortation, we have to speak to the Saints. If faith be such a choice grace, and thou hast it, deny not what God hath done for thee. Which is worst; thinkest thou; the sinner to hide his sinne and deny it, or the Christian to hide and deny his faith? I confesse the first does worst, if we look to the intention of the persons; for the sinner hides his sinne, out of a wicked end, and the doubting soul means well, he is afraid to play the hypocrite, and be found a liar in saying he hath, what he fears he hath not; but if wee consider the consequence of the Christians dis-owning the grace of God in him, and what use the devil makes of it, for the leading him into many other sinnes, it will not be so easie to resolve, whose sinne is the greatest: Good *Joseph* meant piously, when hee had thoughts of putting away secretly his espoused *Mary* (thinking no other, but that shee had played the whore) and yet, it would have been a sad act, if he had persisted in his thoughts, especi-

ally after the Angel had told him, that which was conceived in her to be of the holy Ghost. Thus thou, poor mourning soul, may beart oft thinking to put away thy faith, as some by-blow of Satan, and base born counterfeit grace, begot on thy hypocritical heart by the father of lies. Well, take heed what thou doest, hast thou had no vision, (not extraordinary of an Angel or immediate revelation) but ordinary of the Spirit of God, (I mean) in his Word and Ordinances, encouraging thee from those characters which are in the Scripture given of faith, and the comfimity thy faith hath to them, to take and own thy faith, as that which is conceived in thee by the holy Ghost, and not a brat form'd by the delusion of Satan in the womb of thy own groundless imagination? If so, be afraid of bearing false witness against the grace of God in thee. As there is that makes himself rich in faith, that hath nothing of this grace, so there is that maketh himself poor, that hath great store of this riches. Let us therefore hear what are the grounds of this thy suspicion, that wee may see whether thy feares or thy faith be imaginary and false.

Object. 1. *Object. 1.* Saith the poor soul, I am afraid I have no true faith, because I have not those joyes and consolations, which others have, who believe.

Answer. 1. *Answer. 1.* Thou mayest have inward peace, though not joy. The day may be still and calme, though not glorious and Sunshine; though the Comforter be not come with his ravishing consolation, yet hee may have husht the storme of thy troubled spirit, and true peace as well as joy is the consequent of faith unfeign'd.

2. Suppose, thou hast not yet attained so much as to this inward peace, yet know, thou hast no reason to question the truth of thy faith, for want of this. We have peace with God as soon as wee believe, but not alwayes with our selves. The pardon may be past the Princes hand and Seal, and yet not put into the prisoners hand. Thou think'st them too rash, doest not? who judg'd *Paul* a murderer by the viper that fastened on his hand. And what art thou, who condemn'st thy self for an unbeliever, because of those troubles, and inward agonies, which may fasten for a time on the spirit of the most gracious childe God hath on earth?

Object.

Object. 2. O but can there be any true faith, where there is so much doubting as I finde in my self.

Object. 2.

Answer. There is a doubting which the Scripture opposeth to the least degree of faith. Our blessed Saviour tells them what wonders they shall do, if they believe and doubt not, *Mat. 21. 21.* And *Luke 17. 6.* he tells his disciples, *If they have faith as a graine of mustard-seed, they shall do as much.* That which is a faith without doubting in *Matthew*, is faith as a graine of mustard-seed in *Luke*. But again, there is a doubting which the Scripture opposeth not to the truth of faith, but the strength of faith, *Mat. 14. 31.* *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* They are the words of Christ to sinking *Peter*, in which hee so chides his doubting, as yet to acknowledge the truth of his faith, though weak. All doubting is evil in its nature, yet some doubting, though evil in it self, doth evidence some grace that is good to be in the person so doubting. As smoke proves some fire, and peevishnesse, and pettishnesse in a sick person, that before lay senseless, is a good signe of some mending, though it self a thing bad enough. But the thing here desirable, (I conceive) would be, to give some help to the doubting soul, that hee may know, what his doubting is symptomatical of; whether of true faith (though weak) or of no faith. Now for this, I shall lay down four characters of those doubtings which accompany true faith.

Answer.

First, the doubtings of a true believer, are attended with much shame and sorrow of spirit, even for these doubtings. I appeal to thy conscience (poor doubting soul) whether the consideration of this one sinne, doth not cost thee many a salt tear, and heavy sigh, which others know not of? Now I pray, from whence come these? will unbelief mourn for unbelief? or sinne put it self to shame? no sure, it shews there is a principle of faith in the soul, that takes Gods part; and cannot see his promises, and name wrong'd by unbelief without protesting against it, and mourning under it, though the hands of this grace be too weak at present to drive the enemy out of the soul. The Law dar'd the *Damocel*, that cryed out in the field; and so will the Gospel thee, who sincerely mournest for thy unbelief. That holy man, who ever hee was, *Psal. 77.* was farre gone in this doubting distresse. How many times do wee finde his unbelief, putting the

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mercy and faithfulness of God (which should be beyond all dispute in our hearts) to the question and dubious vote in his distempered soul? Hee might with as much reason have askt his soul, whether there was a God, as whether his mercy was clean gone, and his promise fail? yet so farre did his fears in this hurry carry him aside; but at last you have him acknowledging his folly, *verse 10. and I said, This is my infirmity.* This, I may thank thee for, O my unbelief, thou enemy of God and my soul: Thou wilt be puzzling me with needless fears, and make me think and speak so unworthily of my God. This prov'd there was faith at the bottom of his unbelief.

2. Secondly, the doubtings of a sincere believer, are accompanied with ardent desires after those things, which it most calls in question and doubts of. The weak believer, he questions, whether God loves him or no; but he desires it more than life; and this is the language of a gracious soul; *Psalm. 63. 3. Thy loving-kindnesse is better than life.* He doubts whether Christ be his, yet if you should ask him, what value he sets upon Christ, and what he would give for Christ, he can tell you, and that truly, that no price should be too great if he were to be bought; no condition that God offers Christ upon, appears to him hard, but all easie and cheap. And this is the judgement which only the believing soul can have of Christ. *1 Pet. 2. 7 unto you therefore which believe, hee is precious.* In a word, he doubts whether he be truly holy or only counterfeit; but his soul pants and thirsts after those graces most, which he can see least; he, to him should be the more welcome messenger, that brings him the news of a broken heart, than another that tells him of a whole Crown and Kingdome fallen to him; he disputes every duty and action he doth, whether it be according to the rule of the Word; and yet he passionately desires that he could walk without one wry step from it; and doth not quarrel with the Word, because it is so strict, but with his heart, because it is so loose; and how great a testimony these give of a gracious frame of heart, see *Psalm. 119. verses 20, 140.* where David brings these, as the evidence of his grace: Canst thou therefore, poor soul, let out thy heart strongly after Christ, and his graces, while thou dost not see thy interest in either? Be of good cheer, thou art not so great a stranger with these as thou thinkest thy self. These strong desires

fires are the consequent of some taste thou hast had of them already. And these doubts may proceed, not from an absolute want (as if thou wert wholly destitute of them) but the violence of thy desires, which are not satisfied with what thou hast. It is very ordinary for excessive love to beget excessive fear, and those groundless. The wife, because she loves her husband dearly, fears when he is abroad, she shall never see him more, one while she thinks he is sick, another while killed, and thus her love torments her without any just cause, when her husband is all the while well, and on his way home. A Jewel of great price, or Ring, that we highly value, if but laid out of sight, our extream estimate we set on them, makes us presently think them lost. It is the nature of passions in this our imperfect state, when strong and violent, to disturb our Reason, and hide things from our eye, which else were easie to be seen. Thus many poor doubting souls are looking and hunting to find that faith, which they have already in their bosoms, being hid from them, meerly by the vehemency of their desire of it, and fear they should be cheated with a false one for a true; as the *Damsel*, opened not the door for gladness to Peter, Acts 12.14. Her joy at present made her forget what she hid; so the high value the poor doubting Christian sets on faith, together with an excess of longing after it, suffers him not to entertain so high an opinion of himself, as to think, he at present hath that Jewel in his bosom, which he so infinitely prizeth.

Thirdly, The doubtings of a truly believing soul, make him more inquisitive how he may get, what he sometimes fears he hath not; many sad thoughts pass to and fro in his soul, whether Christ be his or no, whether he may lay claim to the promise, or no; and these cause such a commotion in his spirit, that he cannot rest till he come to some resolution in his own thoughts from the Word concerning this great case; therefore as *Abaskerius*, when he could not sleep, called for the Records and Chronicles of his Kingdom; so the doubting soul betakes himself to the Records of Heaven (the Word of God in the Scripture) and one while he is reading there, another while looking into his own heart, if he can find there any thing, that answers the characters of Scripture-faith, as the face in the Glass, doth the face of man. *David*, Psal. 77. When he was at a loss, what to think of himself, and many doubts did clog his faith, insomuch that the thinking of God

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encreased his trouble, he did not sit down, and let the ship drive (as we say) not regarding, whether God loved him, or no; but *communes with his own heart; and his spirit makes diligent search;* Thus it is with every sincere soul under doubtings, he dares no more sit down contented in that unresolv'd condition, than one, who thinks he smells fire in his House, dares settle himself to sleep, till he hath lookt in every Room and corner, and satisfied himself that all is safe, lest he should be waked with the fire about his ears in the Night; and the poor doubting soul much more afraid, lest it should wake with Hell-fire about it. Whereas a soul in a state and under the power of unbelief, is secure and careless. The old World did not believe the threatning of the flood, and they spend no thoughts about the matter; it is at their doors and windows, before they had used any means how to escape it.

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Fourthly, In the midst of the true Believers doubtings, there is an innitency of his heart on Christ, and a secret purpose still to cleave to him; at the same time, that *Peters* feet were sinking into the waters, he was lifting up a prayer to Christ, and this prov'd the truth of his faith, as the other it's weakness: So *Jonah*, he had many fears, & sometimes so predominant, that as bad humors settle into a sore, so they gather'd into a hasty unbelieving conclusion; yet then his faith had some little secret hold on God. *Jonah 2. 4. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight, yet I will look again toward thy holy Temple: And, v. 7. When my soul fainted within me, I remembred the Lord.* Holy David also, though he could not rid his soul of all those fears, which got into it through his weak faith, as water into a leaking ship, yet he bath his hand at the Pump, and takes up a firm resolution against them, *Psal. 56. 3. At what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.* The doubting Christian sinks, but as a Traveller in a slough, where the bottom is firm, and so recovers himself; but the unbeliever, he sinks in his fears, as a man in a quick sand, lower and lower till he be swallowed up into despair. The weak Christians doubting is like the wavering of a ship at Anchor; he is mov'd, yet not removed from his hold on Christ; but the unbelievers, like the wavering of a wave, which having nothing to stay it, is wholly at the mercy of the wind, *1 Jam. 1. 5. Let him ask in faith nothing wavering, for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea,*

sea, driven with the wind, and tossed.

Object. 3. O but, saith another, I fear mine is a presumptuous faith, and if so, to be sure, it cannot be right.

Ans. For the fuller asswying this objection, I shall lay down three characters of a presumptuous faith.

1. A presumptuous faith, it is an easie faith; it hath no enemy of Satan; or our own corrupt hearts to oppose it, and so like a sinking weed, shoots up and grows rank on a sudden. The Devil never hath the sinner surer, than when dreaming in this fools Paradise, and walking in his sleep, amidst his vain phantastical hopes of Christ and salvation. And therefore he is so far from waking him, that he draws the curtains close about him, that no light nor noise in his conscience may break his rest; did you ever know the Thief call up him in the Night, whom he meant to rob and kill? No; sleep is his advantage. But true faith he is a sworn enemy against; he persecutes it in the very Cradle, as Herod did Christ in the Cratch; he pourses a flood of wrath after it, as soon as it betrayes its own birth, by crying and lamenting after the Lord; if thy faith be legitimate, *Naphtali* may be its name; and thou mayest say, with great wrestlings have I wrestled with Satan and my own base heart, and at last have prevailed. You know the answer that *Rebecca* had, when she enquired of God about the scuffle and striving of the children in her womb, *Two Nations* (God told her) *were in her womb*; If thou canst find the like strife in thy soul, thou mayest comfort thy self, that it is from two contrary principles, faith and unbelief, which are lusting one against another; and thy unbelief which is the elder, (however now it strives for the mastery) shall serve faith the younger.

2. Presumptuous faith is lame of one hand, it hath a hand to receive pardon, and Heaven from God, but no hand to give up it self to God; True faith hath the use of both her hands. *My beloved is mine*, there the soul takes Christ; and *I am his*; there she surrenders her self to the use and service of Christ. Now, didst thou ever pass over thy self freely to Christ? I know none but will profess they do this. But the presumptuous soul, like *Ananias*, lies to the Holy Ghost, by keeping back part, yea, the chief part of that he promised to lay at Christs feet. This lust he sends out of the way, when he should deliver it up to

Object. 3.

Ans.

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justice; and that creature-enjoyment he twines about, and cannot persuade his heart to trust God with the dispose of it, but cries out when the Lord calls for it, *Benjamin shall not go*; his life is bound up in it, and if God will have it from him, he must take it by force, for there is no hope of gaining his consent. If this is the true picture of thy faith, and temper of thy soul, then verily thou bledest thyself in an Idol, and mistakest a bold face, for a believing heart; But if thou beest as willing to be faithful to Christ, as to pitch thy faith on Christ; if thou countest it as great a priviledge, that Christ should have a Throne in thy heart and love, as that thou shouldst have a place and room in his mercy. In a word, if thou beest plain-hearted, and wouldst not hide a sin, nor lock up a creature-enjoyment from him, but desirest freely to give up thy dearest lust to the Gibber, and thy sweetest enjoyments; to stay with, or go from thee, as thy God thinks fit to allow thee (though all this be with much regret and discontent from a malignant party of the flesh within thee) thou provest thyself a sound Believer. And the Devil may as well say that himself believeth, as that thou presumest; if this be to presume, be thou yet more presumptuous. Let the Devil nickname thee and thy faith as he pleaseth; the Rose-water is not the less sweet, because one writes Worm-wood water on the Glasse. The Lord knows who are his, and will own them for his true children, and their graces for the sweet fruits of his Spirit, though a false title be set on them by Satan and the World, yea, sometimes by Believers on themselves. The father will not deny his child, because he in a violent fit of a fever, talks idle, and denies him to be his father.

3. The presumptuous faith is a sapless and unfavoury faith; when an unsound heart pretends to greatest faith on Christ, even then it finds little savour, tastes little sweetness in Christ. No, he hath his old tooth in his head, which makes him relish still the gross food of sensual enjoyments above Christ and his spiritual dainties; would he but freely speak what he thinks, he must confess, that if he were put to his choice, whether he would sit with Christ and his children, to be entertained with the pleasures that they enjoy, from spiritual communion with him in his Promises, Ordinances, and holy wayes; or had rather sit with the Servants, and have the Scraps, which God allows the

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men of the World their full baggs and bellies of carnal treasure; that he would prefer the latter before the former. He brags of his interest in God, but he cares not how little he is in the presence of God in any Duty or Ordinance; certainly if he were such a Favourite as he speaks, he would be more at Court than he is. He hopes to be saved, he saith, but he draws not his wine of joy at his tap. It is not the thoughts of Heaven that comforts him, but what he hath in the World, and of the World, these maintain his joy; when the Worlds Vessel is out, and creature-joy spent, alas, the poor wretch can find little relief from, or relish in his pretended hopes of Heaven, and interest in Christ, but he is still whining after the other. Whereas true faith alters the very creatures palate; No feast so sweet to the Believer, as Christ is; let God take all other Dishes off the board, and leave but Christ; he counts his feast is not gone, he hath what he likes; but let all else stand, Health, Estate, Friends (and what else the World sets a high value on) if Christ be withdrawn, he soon misseth his Dish, and makes his moan, and saith, alas, who hath taken away my Lord? It is Christ that seasons these and all his enjoyments, and makes them savoury meat to his palate; but without him, they have no more taste than the white of an Egge without salt.



CHAP. XH.

The Saints Enemy described with his warlike provision, fiery darts, and what they are.

VVE have done with the Exhortation. And now come to the second general part of the *verse*, i.e. A powerful Argument pressing this Exhortation, contained in these words; *whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*

Ye shall be able, not an uncertain, may be ye shall; but he is peremptory and absolute; *Ye shall be able*, but what to do? *able to quench*, not only to resist and repel, but to quench; But what shall they quench? not ordinary temptations only, but the worst Arrows the Devil hath in his quiver, *fiery darts*, and not some few of them, but *all the fiery darts of the wicked*.

In this second General, there are these two particulars.

1. The Saints Enemy described.

2. The power and puissance of faith over this Enemy. First, of the first.

1. The Saints Enemy described, that in three particulars.

First, In his nature, *wicked*.

Secondly, In their unity, *wicked*, or *wicked one*, *ἡ ὁνὸς*, in the singular number.

Thirdly, Their warlike furniture and provision, with which they take the field against the Saints. Darts, and they *fiery*.

1. First, Here is the Saints enemy described by their nature, *Wicked*; something I have said of this, *ver. 12.* where Satan is called *spiritual wickednesses*; I shall at present therefore pass it over with the lighter hand. Certainly there is some special lesson, that God would have his people learn even from this attribute of the Devil and his limbs (for the whole pack of Devils, and devilish men, are here intended) that they are represented to the Saints consideration by this name so oft *as wicked*. I shall content my self with two ends, that I conceive God principally aims at by this name; First, they are called *wicked*, as an odious name, whereby God would raise his peoples stomachs to a loathing of them, yea, provoke their pure souls to the greatest hatred of them, and especially of sin that makes them so odious.

1. First, They are called *wicked*, as an odious name, whereby God would raise his childrens stomachs into a loathing of sin above all things in the World, and provoke their pure souls as to hatred and detestation of all sin, to a vigorous resistance of the Devil, and his instruments, as such who are *wicked*; which is a name that makes him detestable above any other. God would have us know, that when he himself would speak the worst he can

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of the Devil, he can think of no name for the purpose, like this, to say, he is *the wicked one*; The name which exalts God highest, and is the very excellency of all his other excellencies, is, that he is *The holy one, and none ho'y as the Lord*. This therefore gives the Devil the blackest brand of infamy, that he is the wicked one, and none wicked to that heighth, besides himself. Could Holiness be separated from any other of Gods Attributes (which is the heighth of blasphemy to think) the glory of them would be departed. And could the Devils wickedness be removed from his torments and misery, the case would be exceedingly altered; we ought then to pity him, whom now we must no less than hate and abominate with a perfect hatred.

First, Consider this, all ye who live in sin, and blush not to be seen in the practice of it. O that you would behold your faces in this Glass, and you should see whom you look like; truly, no other than the Devil himself, and in that which makes him most odious, which is his wickedness, never more spit at the name of the Devil, nor seem to be scared at any ill-shapen picture of him, for thou carriest a far more ugly one (and the truest of him that is possible) in thy own wicked bosom. Thou more wicked, the more like the Devil; who can draw the Devils picture like himself? If thou beest a wicked wretch, thou art of the Devil himself (*Cain* (it is said) *was of that wicked one*, 1 Joh. 3. 12. Every sin thou committest, is a new line, that the Devil draws on thy soul. And if the image of God in a Saint, which the Spirit of God is drawing for many years together in a Saint, will be so curious a piece, when the last line shall be drawn in Heaven; O think then, how frightful and horrid a creature thou wilt appear to be, when after all the Devils pains here on Earth to imprint his image upon thee, thou shalt see thy self in Hell; as wicked to the full, as a wicked Devil can make thee.

Secondly, Consider this, O ye Saints, and bestow first your pity on those poor forlorn souls that are under the power of a wicked Devil. It is a lamentable judgment to live under a wicked Government, though it be but of men. For a servant in a family to be under a wicked Master, is a heavy plague. *David* reckons it among other great curses, *Psal. 109. 6. Set a wicked man over him*. O what is it then to have a wicked spirit over him?

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he would shew himself very kind to his friend, that should wish him to be the worst slave in *Turky*, rather than the best servant of sin or Satan. And yet see the folly of men; *Solomon* tells us, *When the wicked bear rule, the people mourn.* Prov. 9, 2. But when a wicked Devil rules, poor besotted sinners laugh and are merry. Well, you who are not out of your wits so far, but know sins service to be the creatures utmost misery, mourn for them, that go themselves laughing to sin, and by sin to Hell. And, *Secondly*, Let it fill thy heart (Christian) with zeal and indignation against Satan in all his temptations, remember he is wicked, and he can come for no good; Thou knowest the happiness of serving a holy God, surely then thou hast an answer ready by thee, against this wicked one comes to draw thee to sin. Canst thou think of fouling thy hands about his base nasty drudgery, after they have been used to so pure and fine work as the service of thy God is? listen not to Satans motions, except thou hast a mind to be wicked.

2.

Secondly, They are called wicked, as a name of contempt, for the encouragement of all Believers in their combat with them. As if God had said, fear them not, they are a wicked company you go against; cause, and they who defend it, both wicked. And truly, if the Saints must have Enemies, the worse they are, the better it is. It would put mettle into a Coward, to fight with such a Crew. Wickedness must needs be weak; the Devils guilt in their own bosoms tells them, their cause is lost, before the battel is fought. They fear thee, Christian, because thou art holy; and therefore thou needst not be dismay'd at them who are wicked. Thou lookest on them as subtle, mighty and many, and then thy heart fails thee, but look on all these subtle mighty spirits as wicked ungodly wretches, that hate God more than thee, yea thee, for thy kindred to him, and thou canst not but take heart. Whose side is God on, that thou art afraid? Will he, that rebuk't Kings for touching his anointed ones, and doing them harm in their bodies and estates, stand still thinkest thou, and suffer these wicked spirits, to attempt the life of God himself in thee, thy grace, thy holiness without coming in to thy help? it is impossible.

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Secondly, The Saints Enemy is set out by their unity; fiery darts of the wicked, &c. *words*, of the wicked one. As if all were shot out of the same bowe, and by the same hand. As if the Christi-
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ans fight were a single Duel with one single Enemy. All the legions of Devils, and multitudes of wicked men and women, make but one great Enemy; They are all one mystical body of wickedness, as Christ and his Saints one mystical holy body. One Spirit acts Christ and his Saints; so one spirit acts Devils, and ungodly men his limbs; the soul is in the little Toe, and the spirit of the Devil in the least of sinners. But I have spoke something of this Subject elsewhere.

Thirdly, The Saints Enemy is here described by his warlike provision, or weapons he useth in fight against them. *Darts*, and those of the worst kind, *fiery darts*.

First, *Darts*, the Devils temptations are the darts he useth against the souls of men and women, and may fitly be so called in a three-fold respect.

1. *Darts* or *Arrows*, they are swift; Thence is our usual expression, *As swift as an arrow out of a bow*. Lightning is called Gods Arrow, because it flies swiftly. *Psal. 18. v. 4. He sent out his arrows and scattered them; he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them*; that is, lightning like arrows. Satans temptations flie like a flash of lightning, not long of coming. He needs no more time than the cast of an eye for the dispatch of a temptation. *Davids* eye did but unawares fall upon *Bathsheba*, and the Devils arrow was in his heart, before he could shut this casement, or the hearing of a word or two. Thus when *Davids* servants had told what *Nabal* the Churlie said, *Davids* choler was presently up; an arrow of revenge wounded him to the heart; what quicker than a thought? yet, how oft is that a temptation to us? one silly thought riseth in a Duty, and our hearts (before intent upon the work) are on a sudden carried away, like a Spaniel after a Bird, that springs up before him as he goes after his Master; yea, if one temptation spreads not, how soon can he send another after it? (as quick as the nimblest Archer) no sooner that one arrow is delivered, but he hath another on the string.

2. *Darts* or arrows flie secretly; and so do temptations. *First*, The arrow oft comes afar off; a man may be wounded with a dart, and not see who shot it. The wicked are said, to shoot their arrows in secret at the perfect, *Psal. 64. 4. And then, they say, Who shall see them?* ver. 4. Thus Satan lets flie a temptation so secretly, that he is hardly suspected in the thing. Sometimes he

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useth a Wifes tongue to do his Errand; another while, he gets behind the back of a Husband, Friend, Servant, &c. and is not seen all the while he is doing his work. Who would have thought to have found a Devil in *Peter* tempting his Master, or suspected, that *Abraham* should be his instrument, to betray his beloved Wife into the hands of a sin? yet it was so. Nay, sometimes he is so secret, that he borrows Gods Bowe to shoot his Arrows from, and the poor Christian is abused, thinking it is God chides, and is angry, when it is the Devil that tempts him to think so, and only counterfeits Gods voyce. *Job* cries out of the arrows of the Almighty, how the poyson of them drank up his spirit, and of the terrors of God, that did set themselves in array against him, *Job* 6.4. When it was Satan all the while that was practising his malice, and playing his pranks upon him, God was friends with this good man, only Satan begg'd leave (and God gave it for a time) thus to affright him. And poor *Job* cries out, as if God had cast him off, and were become his Enemy. Secondly, Darts or Arrows, they make little or no noise as they go, they cut their passage through the Aire, without telling us by any crack or report (as the Cannon doth) that they are coming; Thus insensibly doth temptation make its approach, the Thief is in, before we think of any need to shut the doors. The wind is a creature secret in its motion, of which our Saviour saith, *We know not whence it comes, nor whither it goes*, *John* 3.8. Yet, we hear the sound thereof, as our Saviour saith in the same place. But temptations many times come and give us no warning by any sound they make. The Devil layes his plot so close, that the soul sees not his drift, observes not the Hook till he finds it in his belly. As the woman of *Tekoa* told her Tale so handsomly, that the King passeth judgment against himself in the person of another before he smelt out the business.

3. Darts have a wounding killing nature, especially, when well headed, and shot out of a strong Bowe, by one that is able to draw it; such are Satans temptations, headed with desperate malice; and drawn by a strength no less than angelical; and this against so poor a weak creature as man; that it were impossible, had not God provided good Armor, for our soul to out-stand Satans power, and get safe to Heaven. Christ would have us sensible of their force and danger, by that petition in his prayer which:

which the best of Saints on this side Heaven have need to use; *lead us not into temptation.* Christ was then but newly out of the list; where he had tasted Satans tempting skill and strength, which though beneath his wisdom and power to defeat; yet well he knew, it was able to worst the strongest of Saints. There was never any besides Christ, that Satan did not foyle more or less; 'Twas Christs Prerogative to be tempted, but not led into temptation. *Job*, one of the chief Worthies in Gods Army of Saints, who from Gods mouth is a *none-such*; yet was gall'd by these Arrows shot from Satans Bowe, and put to great disorder. God was fain to pluck him out of the Devils gripe, or else he had been quite worried by that Lyon.

Secondly, Satans warlike provision is, not only darts, but *fiery darts*; some restrain these fiery darts to some particular kind of temptation, as despair, blasphemy, and those which fill the heart with terror and horror; but this (I conceive) is too strait; because faith is a shield for all kind of temptations, and indeed there is none but may prove a fiery temptation; so that I should rather incline to think, all sorts of temptations to be comprehended here, yet so as to respect some in an especial manner more than other; which afterwards shall be instanc'd in.

Quest. Why are Satans darts call'd fiery ones?

Quest.
Ans. 1.

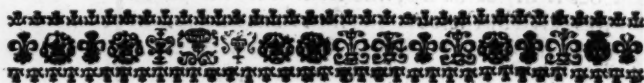
Ans. 1. They may be said to be fiery, in regard of that fiery wrath with which Satan shoots them; they are the fire, this dragon spits, full of indignation against God and his Saints. *Saul*, it is said, *Breath'd out threatening and slaughter against the Church*, *Acts* 9. 1. As one that is inwardly inflamed, his breath is hot, a fiery steam of persecuting wrath, came as out of a burning furnace from him; temptations are the breathings of the Devils wrath.

2. Fiery, in regard of the end they lead to, if not quench'd, and that is Hell-fire, there is a spark of Hell in every temptation. And all sparks flie to their Element, so all temptations tend to Hell and damnation, according to Satans intent and purpose.

3. And chiefly! fiery, in regard of that malignant quality, they have on the spirits of men, and that is to enkindle a fire in the

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heart, and consciences of poor creatures; the Apostle alludes to the custom of cruel Enemies, who used to dip the heads of their Arrows in some poyson, whereby they became more deadly, and did not only wound the part where thy light, but enflame the whole body, which made the cure more difficult; *Job* speaks of the poyson of them which drank up his spirits, *Job* 6.4. They have an envenoming and inflaming quality.



CHAP. XIII.

The fiery nature of Satans enticing temptations with faiths power to quench them.

They are of two sorts, either those that do pleasingly entice and bewitch with some seeming promises of satisfaction to the creature; Or,

Secondly, Such as affright, and carry horror with them; both are fiery, and quenched by faith, and only faith. We shall begin with the first, such as do pleasingly entice. And the Note is this,

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That faith will enable a soul to quench the fire of Satans most pleasing temptations.

1.

1. We shall shew you, that these enticing temptations have a fiery quality in them.

2.

2. That faith is able to quench them.

1.

First, of the first, They have an enflaming quality. There is a secret disposition in the heart of all, to all sin; temptation doth not fall on us as a Ball of fire on Ice or Snow, but as a spark on Tinder, or lightning on a thatch't Roof, which presently is on a flame; hence in Scripture, though tempted by Satan, yet the sin is charged on us. *Jam. 1.14. Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed; Mark!* 'tis Satan tempts,

tempt, but our own lust draws us. The fowler lays the shrapp, but the Birds own desire betrays it into the Net. The heart of man is marvellous prone to take fire from these darts; *where no wood is, the fire goes out*, Prov. 26. 10 and does no hurt, thus did they on Christ; there was no combustible matter of corruption in him for Satan to work upon. But our hearts being once heat in Adam, could never cool since. A sinners heart is compar'd to an Oven, Hos. 7. 4. *They are all adulterers, as an Oven heated by the baker*. The heart of man is the Oven, the Devil the Baker, and temptation the fire with which he heats it, and then no sin comes amiss; *I dwell*, saith David, Psal. 57. *among those that are set on fire*; and I pray who sets them on fire? the Apostle will resolve us, *Jam. 3. 6. set on fire of hell*. Oh friends! when once the heart is inflamed by temptation, what strange effects doth it produce? how hard to quench such a fire, though in a gracious person? David himself under the power of a temptation, so apparent, that a carnal eye could see it, (*Joab* I mean, who reprov'd him) yet was hurried to the loss of seventy thousand mens lives (for so much that one sin cost.) And if the fire be so raging in a David, what work will it make, where no water is nigh, no grace in the heart to quench it? Hence the wicked are said to be mad on their sins, Jer. 50. 38. Spurring on without fear, or wit; like a man enflamed with a fever, that takes his head; there is no holding of him then in his Bed; Thus a soul possess'd with the fury of temptation, runs into the mouth of Death and Hell, and will not be stopped.

Use 1. Oh how should this make us afraid of running into a temptation, when there is such a witchery in it. Some men are too confident, they have too good an opinion of themselves, as if they could not be taken with such a disease; and therefore will breath in any Aire. 'Tis just with God to let such be shot with one of Satans darts, to make them know their own hearts better. Who will pity him, whose House is blown up, that kept his powder in the Chimney corner? *Am I a Dog?* (saith Hazael) 2 Kings 8. Do you make me a Beast, sunk so far below the nature of man, as to embrew my hands in these horrid murders? yet, how soon did this wretch fall into the temptation, and by that one bloody act upon his own Leige Lord (which he perpetrated as soon as he got home) shew, that the other evils, which

trap

Use 1.

which the Prophet foretold of him, were not so improbable as at first he thought. Oh stand off the Devils mark, unless you mean to have one of the Devils Arrows in your side ! keep as far from the whirl of temptation as may be. For if once he get you within his Circle, thy Head may soon be dizzy. One sin helps to kindle another ; the less the greater , as the brush the loggs. *Hosea 7. 5.* When the Courtiers had got their King to Carouse, and play the Drunkard, he soon learnt to play the scorner ; *The Princes have made him sick with bottles of wine, he stretched out his hand with scorn.*

2.

Secondly, Hath Satans darts such an enkindling nature ? Take heed of being Satans instrument, in putting fire to the corruption of another. Some on purpose do it, thus the Whore perfumes her bed, paints her face ; Idolaters as whorish as the other, set out their Temples and Altars with superstitious Pictures, embellished with all the cost that gold and silver can afford them, to bewitch the Spectators eye. Hence they are said, *to be enamoured with their Idols, Esay 57. 5.* As much as any lover with his Minion in her whorish dress. And the Drunkard he enkindles his Neighbours lust, *putting the bottle to him, Hab. 2. 15.* Oh ! what a base work are these men employed about ? by the Law 'tis death for any wilfully to set fire on his Neighbours house ? what then deserve they, that set fire on the souls of men, and that no less than Hell-fire ? But 'tis possible thou mayest do it unawares, by a less matter than thou dreamest on. A silly child playing with a light straw, may set a House on fire, which many wise men cannot quench. And truly Satan may use thy folly and carelessness, to kindle lust in anothers heart. Perhaps an idle light speech drops from thy mouth, and thou meanest no great hurt ; but a gust of temptation may carry this spark into thy friends bosom, and kindle a sad fire there. A wanton Attire (perhaps naked breasts and shoulders) which we will suppose thou weardest with a chaste heart, and only because 'tis the fashion, yet may ensnare anothers eye. And if he that kept a Pit open but to the hurt of a beast, sinn'd, how much more thou, who givest occasion to a souls sin ; which is a worse hurt ? *Paul would not eat flesh, while the world stood, if it made his brother offend, 1 Cor. 8. 13.* And canst thou dote on a foolish dress, and immodest fashion, whereby many may offend still to wear it ? *The body, Christ*
saith,

faith, is better than rayment. The soul then of thy brother is more to be valued surely than an idle fashion of thy Rayment.

We come to the second branch of the point. 2. That faith will enable a soul to quench these temptations. This is call'd our victory over the world, even our faith, 1 John 5. 4. Faith sets its triumphant banner on the Worlds head. The same St. John will tell you, what is meant by the World. *Chap. 2. 15, 16. Love not the world, for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. All that is in the World is said to be lust, because it is food and fuel for lust. Now faith enables the soul to quench those darts, which Satan dips and invenomes with these worldly lusts. Call'd by some the worldlings Trinity.*

1. For the lust of the flesh, under which are comprehended those temptations, that promise pleasure and delight to the flesh; these indeed carry fire in the mouth of them: And when they light on a carnal heart, do soon enflame it with unruly passions, and beastly affections. The Adulterer is said to burn in his lust, *Rom. 1. 27. The Drunkard to be inflam'd with his wine, Essay 5. 11.* No sort of temptation works more strongly, than those which present sensual pleasure, and promise delight to the flesh: sinners are said, *to work all uncleanness with greediness*; with a kind of covetousness, for the word imports, they never have enough; when the voluptuous person hath wasted his Estate, sated his body in luxury, still the fire burns in his wretched heart; no drink will quench a poyson'd mans thirst; nothing but faith can be helpful to a soul in these flames. We find Dives in Hell burning, and not a drop of water to cool the tip of his tongue, found there. The unbelieving sinner, is in a Hell above ground, he burns in his lust; and not a drop of water (for want of faith) to quench the fire; by faith 'tis said those glorious Martyrs, *Heb. 11. quenched the violence of the fire*; and truly the fire of lust is as hot, as the fire of Martyrdom; by faith alone this is quenched also, *Tir. 3. 3, 4. We were sometimes foolish, serving divers lusts and pleasures, but after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, before he saved us. Never could they shake off these lusts, the old companions, till by faith they got a new acquaintance with the grace of God revealed in the Gospel.*



CHAP. XIV.

How faith quencheth the lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eye, and pride of life.

SECT. I.

Quest.

HOW does faith quench this fiery dart of sensual delights?

Answ.

As it undeceives, and takes off the mist from the Christians eyes, whereby he is now enabled to see sin in its naked being, & callow principles, before Satan hath plum'd. It gives him the native taste and relish of sin, before the Devil hath sophisticated it with his sugred sawce. And truly, now sin proves a homely piece, a bitter morsel. Faith hath a piercing eye, it is the evidence of things not seen; it looks behind the Curtain of sense, and sees sin before its *finery wagon*, and it be drest for the stage; to be a Brat that comes from Hell, and brings Hell with it. Now let Satan come if he please, and present a lust never so enticing, the Christians answer is ready; be not cheated oh my soul (saith faith) with a lying spirit. He shews thee a fair *Rachel*, but he intends thee a blear-ey'd *Leah*; he promises joy, but he will pay thee sorrow. The cloaths that make this lust so comely, are not its own. The sweetness thou tastest is not native, but borrowed to deceive thee withall. Thou art *Saul* (said the woman of *Endor*) *why hast thou deceived me?* Thus, faith can call sin and Satan by their own names, when they come in a disguise; thou art Satan, saith faith, why wouldst thou deceive me? God hath said, sin is bitter as gall and worm-

wormwood, and wouldst thou make me believe I can gather the sweet fruits of true delight from this root of bitterness? grapes from these thorns?

Secondly, faith doth not only enable the soul to see the nature of sin void of all true treasure, but also how transcient its false pleasures are, I will not lose, faith faith, sure mercies, for transcient uncertain pleasures. This made *Moses* leap out of the pleasures of the *Egyptian Court*, into the fire of affliction, *Heb. xi. 25*, because he saw them pleasures for a season. Should you see a man in a ship, throw himself over-board into the sea, you might at first think him out of his wits, but if a little while after you should see him stand safe on the shoar, and the ship swallowed up of the waves, you would then think he took the wisest course. Faith sees the world, and all the pleasures of sin sinking, there is a leak in them which the wit of man cannot stop. Now is it not better to swim by faith through a sea of trouble, and get safe to heaven at last, than to sit in the lap of sinful pleasures, till we drown in hells gulf? 'tis impossible the pleasure of sin should last long.

First, because 'tis not natural. Whatever is not natural, soon decays; the nature of sugar is to be sweet, and therefore it holds its sweetness, but sweeten beer or wine never so much with sugar, in a few dayes they will lose their sweetness. The pleasure of sin is extrinsecal to its nature, and therefore will corrupt. None of that sweetnesse, which now bewitches sinners, will be tasted in hell. The sinner shall have his cup spiced there, by his hand that will have it a bitter draught.

Secondly, the pleasures of sin must needs be short, because life cannot be long, and they both end together. Indeed many times the pleasure of sin dies, before the man dies, sinners live to bury their joy in this world. The worm breeds in their conscience, before it breeds in their flesh by death. But be sure, the pleasure of sin never survives this world. The Word is gone out of Gods mouth, every sinner shall lye down in sorrow, and wake in sorrow. Hell is too hot a climate for wanton delights to live in. Now faith is a provident wise grace, and makes the soul be-think it self how it may live in another world; whereas the carnal heart is all for present; his snout is in the trough, and while his draught lasts, he thinks it will never end. But faith hath a large stride, at one pace it can reach over a whole life of years, and see them

them done while they are but beginning ; *I have seen an end of all perfection*, saith David ; he saw the wicked when growing on their bed of pleasure, cut down, and burning in Gods Oven, as if it were done already, *Psal. 37. 2.* And faith will do the like for every Christian, according to its strength and activity. And who would envy the condemned man his seat, which he hath in his way to the Gallows ?

3. Thirdly, faith out-vies Satans proffers, by shewing the soul where choicer enjoyments are to be had at a cheaper rate. Indeed, *best, is best cheap*. Who will not go to that shop where he may be best served ? This Law holds in force among sinners themselves ; The drunkard goes where he may have the best wine ; the glutton, where he may have the best cheer ; Now faith presents such enjoyments to the soul, that are beyond all compare best ; it leads to the promise, and entertains it there at Christs cost, with all the rich dainties of the Gospel ; not a dish that the Saints feed on in heaven, but faith can set it before the soul, and give it (though not a full meal) yet such a taste, as shall melt it in joy unspcakable and full of glory. This sure must needs quench the temptation. When Satan sends to invite the Christian to his gross fare, will not the soul say, Should I forsake those pleasures that cheered, yea, ravisht my heart, to go and debase my self with sins polluted bread, where I shall be but a fellow-commoner with the beast, (who shares in sensual pleasures with man) yea, become worse than the beast ; a devil, like Judas, who arose from his Masters table, to sit at the devils ?

SECT. II.

The lusts of the eye, these are quenched by faith ; by the lust of the eye, the *Apostle* means those temptations which are drawn from the worlds pelf and treasure ; called so, First, because 'tis the eye that commits adultery with these things ; As the unclean eye looks upon another mans wife, so the covetous eye looks on anothers wealth to lust after it. Secondly, because all the good that in a manner is receiv'd from them, is but to please the eye, *Eccles. 5. 11.* *What good is there to the owners thereof, saving the*

be-

beholding them with their eyes? That is, if a man hath but to buy any food and rayment, enough to pay his daily shot of necessary expences, the surpluse serves only for the eye to play the wanton with; yet we see how pleasing a morsel they are to a carnal heart. 'Tis rare to find a man that will not stoop by base and sordid practices, to take up this golden apple. When I consider what sad effects this temptation had on *Ahab*, who to gain a spot of ground of a few acres, (that could not add much to a Kings revenues) durst swim to it in the owners blood; I wonder not to see men, whose condition is necessitous, nibbling at the hook of temptation, where the bait is a far greater worldly advantage. This is the door the Devil entred into *Judas* by; This was the break-neck of *Demas's* faith, he embraced this present world. Now faith will quench a temptation edg'd with these.

First, faith persuades the soul of Gods fatherly care and providence over it. And where this breast-work is rais'd, the soul is safe, so long as it keeps within its line. Oh! faith Satan, if thou wouldst but venture on a lye, make bold a little with God in such a command, this wedge of gold is thine, and that advantage will accrue to thy estate. Now faith will teach the soul to reply; I am well provided for already; Satan, I need not thy pension; why should I play the thief for that, which if good, God hath promis'd to give? *Heb. 13. 5. Let your conversation be without covetousnesse, and be content with such things as you have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* How canst thou want, oh my soul, that by the promise hast command of Gods purse? Let him that is without God in the world, shift and sherk by his wits; do thou live by thy faith.

Secondly, faith teaches the soul, that the creatures comfort and content comes not from abundance, but Gods blessing; And to gain the world by a sinne, is not the road that leads to Gods blessing, *Prov. 28. 20. A faithful man abounds with blessings; but he that maketh haste to be rich, shall not be innocent.* Shouldst thou (faith faith) heap up the worlds goods in an evil way, thou art never the nearer to the content thou expectest, 'tis hard to steal ones meat, and then crave a blessing on it at Gods hands. What thou getst by sin, Satan cannot give thee quiet possession of, nor

discharge those suits, which God will surely commence against thee.

3.

Thirdly, faith advanceth the soul to higher projects, than to seek the things of this life. It discovers a world beyond the Moon; And there lies faiths Merchandize; leaving the Colliers of this world to load themselves with clay and coals, while it trades for grace and glory; faith fetcheth its riches from on far. *Saul* did not more willingly leave seeking his fathers asses, when he heard of a Kingdom; than the believing soul leaves proling for the earth, now it hears of Christ and heaven, *Psal. 39. 6, 7. verse the sixth, we find holy David branding the men of the world for folly, that they troubled themselves so much for naught; Surely (saith he) they are disquieted in vain, he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them, and v. 7. we have him with a holy disdain, turning his back upon the world, as not worth his pains, and now Lord, what wait I for? As if he had said, is this the portion I could be content to set down with? to set upon a greater heap of riches, than my neighbour hath? My hope is in thee, deliver me from all my transgressions, verse 8.* Every one as they like. Let them that love the world, take the world; but Lord pay not my portion in gold, or silver, but in pardon of sin, this I wait for. *Abraham*, he by faith had so low an esteem of this worlds treasure, that he left his own countrey to live here a stranger, in hope of a better, *Heb. 11.*

SECT. III.

3.

The third lust of the world, *The pride of life*. There is an itch of pride in mans heart after the gaudy honours of the world; And this itch of mans proud flesh, the Devil labours to scratch and irritate by sutable proffers. And when the temptation without, and lust within meet, then it works to purpose; *Balaams* lov'd the way that led to Court; and therefore spurs on his conscience (that boggl'd more than the Ass he road on) till the blood came. The Jews, when convinced of Christs person, and doctrine; yet were such slaves to their honour, and credit, that they part with

with Christ, rather than hazard that. *John 12. 43. For they love the praise of men, more than the praise of God.* Now faith quenches this temptation; and with a holy scorn disdains, that all the preferment the world hath to heap on him, should be a bribe for the least sin; *Heb. 11. 24. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the Son of Pharaohs Daughter.* Though by his Adoption, he might have been heir for ought we know, to the Crown; yet this he threw at his heels: It is not said, he did not seek to be the Son of Pharaohs Daughter, though that would have founded a high commendation, having so fair an opportunity; some would not have scrupl'd a little Court-flattery, thereby to have colog'd themselves into further favour (having so fair a stock in the Kings heart to set up with;) but he refused to be called; honour came trouling in upon him; As water at a flowing tyde; now, to stand against this flood of preferment, and no breach made in his heart to entertain it; this was admirable indeed. Nay, he did not refuse this preferment for any principality that he hoped for elsewhere. He forsook not one Court to go to another, but to joya with a beggerly reproached people; yea, by rejecting their favour, he incur'd the wrath of the King, yet faith carried him through all those heights and depths of favour, and disgrace, honour, and dishonour. And truly, where-ever this grace is (allowing for its strength and weaknesse,) it will do the like; we find, *verse 33. in the same chapter, how Samuel and the Prophets, through faith subdued Kingdomes:* which sure is not only meant of the conquest of the sword (though some of them perform'd honourable atchievements that way) but also by despising the honour, and preferments of them. This indeed many of the Prophets are famous for; and in particular, *Samuel*, who at Gods command gave away a Kingdom from his own house and family, by anointing *Saul*, though himself at present had possession of the chief Magistrates chair. And others, *verse 37. we read were tempted;* that is (when ready to suffer) were offer'd great preferments, if they would bend to the times, by receding a little from the bold profession of their faith: But they chose rather the flames of Martyrdome than the favour of Princes on those terms.

But more particularly to shew you, how faith quenches this temptation.

I. Faith

1. Faith takes away the fuel that feeds this temptation; "with-draw the oyl, and the Lamp goes out. Now that which is fuel to this temptation, is pride; where this lust is in any strength, no wonder the creatures eyes are dazled with the sight of that which suits the desires of his heart so well. The devil now by a temptation does but broach, and so give vent to what the heart it self is full with. *Simon Magus* had a haughty spirit, he would be *Simon Méγας*, some great man, and therefore when he did but think an opportunity was offer'd to mount him up the stage, he is all on fire with a desire of having a gift to work miracles, that he dares offer to play the huckster with the Apostle. Whereas a humble spirit loves a low seat, is not ambitious to stand high in the thoughts of others, and so, while he stoops in his own opinion of himself, the bullet flies over his head, which hits the proud man on the breast. Now 'tis faith lays the heart low. Pride and faith are opposed; like two buckets, if one goes up, the other goes down in the soul, *Hab. 2. 4. Behold, his soul that is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.*

2. Secondly, faith is Christs favourite; and so makes the Christian expect all his honour from him; indeed 'tis one of the prime acts of faith, to cast the soul on God in Christ, as all-sufficient to make it complearly happy. And therefore when a temptation comes; soul, thou mayest raise thy self in the world, to this place, or that esteem, if thou wilt but dissemble thy profession, or allow thy self in such a sin. Now faith choaks the buller. Remember whose thou art, Oh my soul; hast thou not taken God for thy Liege Lord, and wilt thou accept preferment from anothers hand? Princes will not suffer their Courtiers to become Pensioners to a forreign Prince, least of all to a Prince in hostility to them: Now faith faith, the honour or applause thou gettest by sin, makes thee Pensioner to the Devil himself, who is the greatest enemy God hath.

3. Thirdly, faith shews the danger of such a bargain, should a Christian gain the glory of the world for one sin.

First, faith faith, hadst thou the whole worlds Empire, with all bowing before thee, this would not add to thy stature one cubit in the eye of God. But thy sin which thou payest for the purchase, blots thy name in his thoughts, yea, makes thee odious in his sight; God must first be out of love with himself, before he

can

can love a sinner as such. Now wilt thou incur this for that? Is it wisdom to lose a prize, to draw a blank?

Secondly, faith faith, the worlds pomp and glory cannot satisfy thee; it may kindle thirstings in thy soul, but quench none; it will beget a thousand cares and fears, but quiet none. But thy sin that procures these, hath a power to torment and torture thy soul.

Thirdly, when thou hast the worlds Crown on thy head, how long shalt thou wear it? They are sick at Rome (as he said) and die in Princes Courts, as well as at the spitale; yea, Kings themselves are put as naked to their beds of dust as others. In that day all thy thoughts will perish with thee: But the guilt of thy sinne, which was the ladder by which thou didst climb up the hill of honour, will dogge thee into another world. These and such like are the considerations by which faith breaks off the bargain.

4.

Fourthly, faith presents the Christian with the exploits of former Saints, who have renounced the worlds honour, and applause, rather than defile their consciences, and prostitute their souls to be defouled by the least sinne. Great *Tamburlain* carried the lives of his Ancestors into the field with him, in which he used to read before he gave battel, that he might be stirred up, not to stain the blood of his family by cowardize, or any unworthy behaviour in fight. Thus faith peruses the roll of Scripture-Saints, and the exploits of their faith over the world, that the Christian may be excited to the same gallantry of spirit. This was plainly the *Apostles* design, in recording those Worthies, with the trophies of their faith, *Heb. 11*: that some of their nobleness might steal into our hearts, while we are reading of them, as appears *chap. 12. 1*. Seeing we also are compass'd about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that does so easily beset us. Oh, what courage does it put into the souldier, to see some before him to run upon the face of death? *Elisha* having seen the miracles God wrought by *Elijah*, smites the waters of *Jordan* with his Mantle, saying, *where is the Lord God of Elijah?* and they parted; *2 Kings 2. 14*. Thus faith makes use of the exploits of former Saints, and turns them into prayer. Oh where is the Lord God of *Abraham*, *Moses*, *Samuel*, and those other Worthies, who by faith have trampled on the worlds.

worlds pomp and glory, subdued temptations, stopt the mouths of lion-like lusts? Art not thou O God, the God of the valleys, the meanest Saints, as well as of the mountains, more eminent Heroes? Do not the same blood, and spirits run in the veins of all believers? Were they victorious, and shall I be the only slave, and of so prostrate a spirit, like *Issachar*, to couch under my burden of corruption, without shaking it off? Help me oh my God, that I may be avenged of these mine enemies. And when it hath been with God, it will also plead with the Christian himself. Awake, faith, oh my soul, and prove thy self akin to these holy men, that thou art born of God as they were, by thy victory over the world.



CHAP. XV.

Sheweth the difference between faiths conquest over the world, by quenching the fiery darts shot from it; and that victory which some of the better Heathens attained to. As also a tryal of our faith propounded, by this power to quench Satans enticing temptations more or lesse.

Object.

BUt some may say, if this be all faith enables to, this is no more than some Heathens have done. They have trampled on the profits, pleasures of this world, who never knew what faith meant.

Answer.

Indeed many of them have done so much by their moral principles, as may make some (who would willingly pass for believers, at hand) to be out-gone by them who shot in so weak a bow

bowe. Yet it will appear, that there is a victory of faith, which in the true believer out-shoots them more than their moral conquest doth the debauched conversations of looser Christians.

Faith quenches the lust of the heart, 1. Those very embers of corruption, which are so secretly rak't up in the inclination of the soul, finde the force and power of faith to quench them. *Faith purifies the heart, Acts 15. 9.* Now, none of their conquests reach the heart. Their longest ladder was too short to reach the walls of this Castle; They swept the door, trim'd a few outward roomes; But the seat and sink of all (in the corruption of mans nature) was never cleansed by them: so that the fire of lust was rather pent in, than put out. How is it possible that could be cleansed, the filthiness of which was never known to them? Alas, they never lookt so near themselves to find that enemy within them, which they thought was without; Thus while they laboured to keep the thief out, he was within, and they knew it not; for they did either proudly think, that the soul was naturally endued with principles of vertue, or vainly imagine it to be but an *abrasa Tabula, white-paper*, on which they might write good or evil as they pleased. Thus you see the seat of their warre was in the world without them, which after some sort they conquer'd. But the lust within remain'd untouch't, because a *terra incognita* to them: It is faith from the Word that first discovers this unsound land.

1.

Secondly, faiths victory is uniform; Sinne in Scripture is call'd a *body*, Rom. 6. 6. because made up of several members, or as the body of an Army, consisting of many troops and Regiments, 'tis one thing to beat a troop, or put a wing of an Army to flight, and another thing to rout and break the whole Army. Something hath been done by moral principles, like the former; they have got some petty victory, and had the chase of some more gross, and exterior sinnes; but then they were fearfully beaten by some other of sinnes troops: When they seem'd to triumph over the lust of the flesh, and eye the worlds profits and pleasures. They were at the same time slaves to the pride of life; meer *gloria animalia*, kept in chaines by the credit and applause of the world. As the sea, (which they say) loses as much in one place in the land, as it gains in another; so what they got in a

2.

seeming victory over one sinne, they lost again by being in bondage to another, and that a worse, because more spiritual. But now faith is uniform, and routs the whole body of sinne, that not one single lust, stands in its unbroken strength. *Sinne shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under grace.* Rom. 6. 14. Sin shall not, that is, no sin; it may stir like a wounded souldier on his knees; they may rally like broken troops, but never be long master of the field where true faith is seen.

3.

Thirdly, faith enables the soul, not only to quench these lusts, but the temptation being quench'd, it enables him to use the world it self against Satan, and so beat him with his own weapon; by striking his own cudgels to his head. Faith quenches the fire of Satans darts, and then shoots them back on him; This it doth, by reducing all the enjoyments of the world which the Christian is possessed of, into a serviceableness, and subordination for the glory of God; Some of the Heathens admired champions, to cure the lust of the eye, have (from a blind zeal) pluckt them out: To shew the contempt of riches, have thrown their money into the sea: To conquer the worlds honour and applause, have sequestred themselves from all company in the world. A preposterous way, that God never chalked. Shall we call it a victory, or rather a phrensie! The world by this time perceives their folly. But faith enables for a nobler conquest. Indeed, when God calls for any of these enjoyments, faith can lay all at Christs feet; but while God allows them, faiths skill and power is in sanctifying them; it corrects the windiness, and flatulent nature of them, so that, what on a naughty heart rots and corrupts, by faith turnes to good nourishment in a gracious soul. If a house were on fire, which would you count the wiser man; he that goes to quench the fire by pulling the house down, or he, that by throwing good store of water on it, doth this as fully, and also leaves the house standing for your use? The Heathen and some superstitious Christians, think to mortifie, by taking away what God gives u leave to use, but faith puts out the fire of lust in the heart, and leaves the creature to be improv'd for Gods glory, and enjoyed to the Christians comfort.

Use 1.

Use 1. This may be a touch-stone for our faith; whether of the right make or no; Is thy faith a temptation-quenching faith? Many say, they believe, yes that they do, they thank God they are

not

not infidels: Well, what exploits canst thou do with thy faith? Is it able to defend thee in a day of battel? and cover thy soul in safety, when Satans darts flie thick about thee? or is it such a forry shield, that lets every arrow of temptation pierce thy heart thorow it? Thou believest, but still as very a slave to thy lust as ever; when a good fellow calls thee out to a drunken meeting, thy faith cannot keep thee out of the snare, but away thou goest, as a fool to the stocks. If Satan tells thee thou mayest advantage thy estate by a lye, or cheat in thy shop, thy faith stands very tamely by, and makes no resistance. In a word, thou hast faith, and yet drivest a trade of sin in the very face of it. Oh God forbid, that any should be under so great a spirit of delusion, to carry such a lye in their hand, and think it a saving faith. Will this faith ever carry thee to heaven, that is not able to bring thee out of hell? for there thou livest, while under the power of thy lust. *Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and come and stand before me?* Jer. 7. 1. If this be faith, welfare the honest Heathens, who escap't these gross pollutions of the world, which you like beasts with your faith lie wallowing in. I had rather be a sober Heathen, than a drunken Christian, a chaste Heathen, than an unclean believer. Oh venture not the life of your souls with such a paper-shield; come to him for a faith, that is the faith-maker, God I meane; he will help thee to a faith, that shall quench the very fire of hell it self, though kindled in thy bosome, and divide the waves of thy lust, in which now thou art even drown'd (as once he did the sea for Israel) that thou shalt go on dry land to heaven, and thy lusts not be able to knock off the wheels of thy chariot. But if thou attemptest this with thy false faith, the Egyptians end will be thine, Heb. 11. 29. *By faith they passed through the red sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians assailing to do, were drowned.* Though true faith gets safely thorough the depths of temptation, yet false faith will drown by the way. But perhaps thou canst tell us better news than this, and give us better evidence for the truth of thy faith, than so. Let us therefore hear what singular thing hath been done by thee since a believer. The time was, thou wert as weak as water; every puff of winde, blast of temptation blew thee down; thou wert carried as a dead fish with the stream; but canst thou say, since thou hast been acquainted with

Christ, thou art endued with a power to repel those temptations, which before held thy heart in perfect obedience to their commands? Canst thou now be content to bring thy lusts, which once were of great price with thee (as those believers did their conjuring books, *Acts* 19, 19.) and throw them into the fire of Gods love in Christ to thy soul, there to consume them? possibly thou hast not them at present under thy foot in a full conquest, yet have they begun to fall in thy thoughts of them, and is thy countenance changed towards them to what it was? be of good comfort, this is enough to prove thy faith of the royal race. *When Christ comes* (said the convinced Jews) *will he do more miracles than these, which this man hath done*, *John* 7. 31? And when Christ comes by faith into the heart, will he do greater works than these thy faith hath done?



CHAP. XVI.

An Objection against believing, answered: And some directions how to use this shield to quench enticing temptations.

Use. 2.

THis helps to answer that Objection by which many poor souls are discouraged from believing, and closing with the promise. Oh, saith the tempted soul, ye bid me believe; alas, how dare I, when I cannot get victory of such a lust, and am overcome by such a temptation? what have such as I to do with a promise? See here (poor soul) this *Goliath* prostrated; Thou art not to believe because thou art victorious, but, that thou mayest be victorious. The reason why thou art so worsted by the enemy, is for want of faith; *If you believe not, surely you shall not be established*, *Isa.* 7. 2. wouldst thou be cured before thou

goest

goest to the Physician? that sounds harsh to thy own reason, and is as if thou shouldst say, thou wilt not go to the Physician, till thou hast no need of him. No, go and touch Christ by faith, that vertue may flow from him to thy soul; thou must not think to eat the fruit, before thou plantest the tree. Victory over corruption is a sweet fruit; but found growing only upon faiths branches. Satan does by thee, as *Saul* did by the *Israelites*, who weakned their hands in battel by keeping them fasting. Up and eat (Christian) a full meal on the promise; if thou wouldst find thy eyes enlightened, and thy hands strengthened for the combat with thy lusts. 'Tis one part of the doctrine of devils, which we read of, 1 *Tim. 4. To forbid meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving.* But the grand doctrine of the devil, which above all he would promote, is to keep poor trembling soules from feeding by faith on the Lord Jesus; as if Christ were some forbidden fruit; whereas God hath appointed him above all other, that he should be received with thanksgiving of all humble sinners. And therefore in the name of God I invite you to this feast; Oh, let not your soules (who see your need of Christ, and are pinched at your very heart for want of him) be leane from day to day, through your unbelief; But come eat, and your soules shall live. Never was childe more welcome to his fathers table, than thou art to Christs; and that feast which stands on the Gospel-board.

Use 3. Make use of faith oh ye Saints, as for other ends and purposes, so particularly for this, of quenching this kinde of fiery darts. 'Tis not the having of a shield, but the holding and weilding of it, that defends the Christian. Let not Satan take thee with thy faith out of thy hand, as *David* did *Saul* in the cave, with his spear sticking in the ground, which should have been in his hand.

Quest. But how would you have me use my shield of faith for my defence against these fiery darts of Satans enticing temptations?

Ans. By faith engage God to come in to thy succour against them. Now, there are three engaging acts of faith, which will bind God (as we may so say with reverence) to help thee, because he binds himself to help such.

The first is the prayerful act of faith. Open thy case to God

Use 3.

Quest.

Ans.

in prayer, and call in help from heaven. As the governour of a besieged Castle, would send a secret messenger to his General or Prince to let him know his state, and straits. The Apostle, *1am.* 4. 2. saith, *Ye fight and warre, yet you have not, because ye ask not.* Our victory must drop from heaven if we have any; but it staves till prayer comes for it. Though God had a purpose to deliver *Israel* out of *Egypt*, yet no newes of his coming, till the groanes of his people rangin his ears. This gave heaven the alarum, *Exod.* 2. 24. *Their cry came up unto God, and he heard their groaning, and remembered his covenant.* Now, the more to prevaile upon God in this act of faith, fortifie thy prayer with those strong reasons, which Saints have used in like cases; As, First, engage God from his promise, when thou prayest against any sinne; shew God his own hand, in such promises as these; *Sinne shall not have dominion over you, Rom.* 6. *He will subdue our iniquities under, Micah* 7. Prayer is nothing but the promise revers'd, or Gods Word form'd into an argument, and retorted by faith upon God againe. Know Christian, thou hast Law on thy side, bills and bonds must be paid, *Psal.* 119. 36. *David* is there praying against the sinnes of a wanton eye, and a dead heart; *Turne away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way;* and see how he urgeth his argument in the next words, *stablish thy Word unto thy servant.* A good man is as good as his word, and will not a good God? but where findes *David* such a word for help against these sinnes? surely in the Covenant, 'tis in the *Magna Charta*. The first promise held forth thus much, *The seed of the woman shall break the Serpents head.* Secondly, plead with God from relation. Art thou one God hath taken into his family? Hast thou chosen God for thy God? Oh what an argument hast thou here! *I am thine, Lord save me,* saith *David*. Who will look after the childe, if the father will not? Is it for thy honour, Oh God, that any childe of thine should be a slave to sinne? *Be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy Name;* Order my steps in thy Word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me, *Psal.* 119. 132. Thirdly, engage God from his Sonnes bloody death to help thee against thy lusts, that were his murderers: What died Christ for, but to *redeme us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people?* *Titus* 2. 14. And shall not Christ be re-imburs'd of what

what he laid out? Shall he not have the price of his blood, and purchase of his death? In a word, what is Christs praying for in heaven, but what was in his mouth when praying on earth? that his *Father would sanctifie them, and keep them from the evil of the world*: Thou comest in a good time, to beg that of God, which thou findest Christ hath askt for thee.

A second way to engage God, is by faiths expecting act; when thou hast been with God, expect good from God. *I will direct my prayer to thee, and will look up*, Psalme 5. 3. for want of this, many a prayer is lost. If you do not believe, why do you pray? and if you believe, why do you not expect? by praying you seem to depend on God; by not expecting, you again renounce your confidence, and ravel out your prayer; What is this, but to take his name in vain, and to play bo-peep with God? as if one that knocks at your door, should before you can come to open it to him, go away, and not stay to be spoke with. Oh Christian, stand to your prayer in a holy expectation of what you have begg'd upon the credit of the promise, and you cannot mis of the ruine of your lusts.

Quest. O but faith the poore soul, shall not I presume to expect when I have prayed against my corruptions, that God will bestow so great a mercy on me as this is?

Ans. 1. Doeſt know what it is to presume? He presumes, that takes a thing before it is granted. He were a presumptuous man indeed, that should take your meat off your table, who never was invited: But I hope your guest is not over-bold, that ventures to eat of what you set before him. For one to break into your house, upon whom you shut the door, were presumptuous; but to come out of a storme into your house, when you are so kinde as to call him in, is no presumption, but good manners. And, if God opens not the door of his promise to be a sanctuary unto poor humbled sinners, flying from the rage of their lust; truly then I know none of this side heaven, that can expect welcome. God hath promised to be a King, a Law-giver to his people; now 'tis no presumption in Subjects to come under their Princes shadow, and expect protection from them, *Iſa.* 33. 21, 22. God there promiſeth.

2.

*Quest.**Ans.*

miseth, he will be a place of broad waters and streams, wherein no Gally shall go with Oars, neither shall gallant ships pass thereby. For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, he will save us. God speaks to his people, as a Prince or a State would to their Subjects: He will secure them in their traffique and merchandize, from all Pyrats and Pickroons; they shall have a free trade: Now soul, thou art molested with many Pyrat-lusts that infest thee, and obstruct thy commerce with heaven; yea, thou hast complained to thy God, what loss thou hast suffered by them; ~~in~~ now presumption to expect relief from him, that he will rescue thee from them, that thou mayest serve him without fear who is thy Leige Lord?

2.

Secondly, you have the Saints for your presidents: Who when they have been in combat with their corruptions: yea, been foiled by them, have even then acted their faith on God, and expected the ruine of those enemies, which for the present have over-runne them, *Psalm 65. 3. iniquities prevaile against me* (he means his own sinnes, and others wrath) but see his faith; at the same time that they prevail'd over him, he beholds God destroying of them. As appears in the very next word) *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* See here poor Christian, who thinkest that thou shalt never get above deck. Holy *David* has a faith, not only for himself, but also all believers, (of whose number I suppose thee one) *as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away!* And mark the ground he hath for this his confidence, *verse 4. taken from Gods choosing thee, Blessed is the man whom thou chocest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts.* As if he had said, surely he will not let them be under the power of sinne, or want of his gracious succour, whom he sets so nigh himself. This is Christs own argument against *Satan* in the behalf of his people. *The Lord rebuke thee O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee, Zech. 3. 2.*

3.

Thirdly, thou hast encouragement for this expecting act of faith, from what God already hath enabled thee to do. Thou canst (if a believer indeed) through mercy fly, that sinne is not in that strength within thy soul, as it was before thy acquaintance with Christ, his Word and wayes; Though thou art not what thou wouldest be; yet also, thou art not what thou hast been. There was a time, when sin plaid *Rex* in thy heart with-

out

out controul. Thou didst go to sin as a ship to sea before wind and tyde. Thou didst dilate, and spread thy affections to receive the gale of temptation: But now the tyde is turned, and runs against those motions, though weakly (being but new flood) yet thou findest a secret wrestling with them, and God seasonably succouring thee; so that Satan hath not all his will on thee. Well, here is a sweet beginning, and let me tell thee, this promiseth thee a readinesse in God to perfect the victory; yea, God would have thy faith improve this into a confidence for a total deliverance. *Moses*, when he slew the *Egyptian*, he supposed his brethren would have understood (by that little hint and essay) how that God would deliver them, Acts 7. 25. O 'tis a bad improvement of the succours God gives us, to argue from them to unbelief; He smote the rock, that the waters gushed out; but can he give bread also? He broke my heart (saith the poor creature) when it was a rock, a flint; and brought me home, when I was walking in the pride of my heart against him; but can he give bread to nourish my weak grace? I am out of *Egypt*; but can he master those Giants in iron chariots that stand betwixt me and *Canaan*? he helpt me in such a temptation, but what shall I do the next bout? Oh, do not grieve a good God with these heart-aking questions. You have the former rain, why should you question the latter? *Benjamin* was a good pawn, to make old *Jacob* willing to go himself to *Egypt*. The grace which God hath already enriched thee with, is a sure pledge that more is coming to it.

Thirdly, the expecting act of faith must produce another, an endeavouring act to set the soul on work, in the confidence of that succour it expects from God; when *Jehoshaphat* had prayed and stablished his faith on the good word of promise, then he takes the field, and marches out under this victorious banner against his enemies, 2 Chron. 20. Go Christian, do as he did, and speed as he sped: What *David* gave in counsel to his Son *Solomon*, that give I to thee, 1 Chron. 22. 16. Arise, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee; that faith which sets thee on work for God, against thy sins as his enemies, will undoubtedly set God on work for thee against them as thine; The *Lepers* in the Gospel were cured, not sitting still, but walking, Luke 17. 14. It came to pass, that as they went, they were cleansed. They meet

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their cure in an act of obedience to Christs command, the promise saith *Sinne shall not have dominion over you*; the command bids, *mortifie your earthly members*; go thou, and make a valiant attempt against thy lusts, upon this Word of command, and in doing thy duty, thou shalt find the performance of the promise. The reason of so many fruitless complaints among Christians, concerning the power of their corruptions, lies in one of these two miscarriages; either they endeavour without acting faith on the promise, and such indeed go at their own peril; like those bold men, *Numb. 14. 40.* who *presumptuously went up the hill*, to fight the *Canaanites*, though *Moses* told them, *the Lord was not among them*; thus slighting the conduct of *Moses* their leader, as if they headed not his help to the victory, a clear resemblance of those who go in their own strength to resist their corruptions, and so fall before them; Or else they pretend to believe, but it is *oriosa fide*, their faith doth not set them on a vigorous endeavour. They use faith as an eye, but not as an hand; they look for victory to drop from heaven upon their heads, but do not fight to obtain it; this is a meer fiction, a fanciful faith; he that believes God for the event, believes him for the means also; if the Patient dare trust the Physician for his cure, he dare also follow his prescription in order to it; And therefore Christian sit not still, and say thy sins shall fall, but put thy self in array against them; God who hath promised thee victory, calls thee to thy armes, and means to use thy own hands in the battel, if ever thou gettest it: *Get thee up* (said the Lord to *Joshua*) *wherefore sleepest thou thus upon thy face?* *Josh. 7.* 10. God liked the prayer and moan he made very well; but there was something else for him to do, besides praying and weeping, before the *Amorites* could be overcome: And so there is for thee Christian with thy faith to do, besides praying and expecting thy lusts down, and that is searching narrowly into thy heart, whether there be not some neglect on thy part, as an *Achan*, for which thou art so worsted by sin, and fleest before the face of every temptation.



CHAP. XVII.

Of the second sort of temptations that are more affrighting, and how Faith quencheth these darts in particular temptations to Atheism, which is overcome not by reason, but by Faith.

HAVING thus dispatcht the first kind of fiery darts; temptations, which are enticing and alluring. We now proceed to the second kind, such as are of an affrighting nature, by which Satan would dismay and dispirit the Christian; and my task is still the same, to shew the power of faith in quenching these fiery darts. Let then the point be this.

SECT. I.

That faith, and only faith, can quench the fiery darts of Satans affrighting temptations. This sort of fiery darts is our enemies reserve; when the other proves unsuccessful, then he opens this quiver, and sends a shower of these arrows to set the soul on flame, if not of sin, yet of terroure and horroure; when he cannot carry a soul laughing to hell, through the witchery of pleasing temptations, hee'll endeavour to make him go mourning to heaven, by amazing him with the other. And truly it is not the least support to a soul exercised with these temptations, to consider, they are a good sign, that Satan is hard put to it, when these arrows are upon his string. You know an enemy that keeps a Castle, will preserve it as long as he can hold it, but when he sees he

Doct.

must out, then he sets it on fire to render it if possible, uselesse to them that come after him; while the strong man can keep his house under his own power, he labours to keep it in peace; he quenches those fire-balls of conviction, that the spirit is often shooting into the conscience: but when he perceives it is no longer tenable, the mutiny within encreases, and there is a secret whisper in the soul of yielding unto Christ; now he labours to set the soul on fire, by his affrighting temptations; Much more doth he labour to do it, when Christ hath got the Castle out of his hands, and keeps it by the power of his grace against him. 'Tis very observable, that all the darts shot against *Job*, were of this sort; he hardly made any use of the other, when God gave him leave to practice his skill; why did he not tempt him with some golden apple of profit, or pleasure, or such like enticing temptations? surely, the high testimony God gave to this his eminent servant, discouraged Satan from this method; yea, no doubt, he had tryed *Jobs* manhood before this as to those, and found him too hard; so that now he had no other way left probable to attain his design but this.

I shall content my self with three instances of this sort of fiery darts, shewing how faith quenches them all. Temptations to Atheism, Blasphemy, and Despair.

SECT. II.

The first is his temptation to *Atheism*, which for the horrid nature thereof, may well be called a fiery dart; partly, because by this he makes so bold an attempt, striking at the being of God himself; as also, because of the consternation he produceth in a gracious soul wounded with it; 'Tis true, the devil who cannot himself turn Atheist, is much lesse able to make a child of God an Atheist, who hath not only in common with other men, an indelible stamp of a Deity in his conscience, but such a sculpture of the divine nature in his heart, as irresistibly demonstrates a God; yea, lively represents a holy God, whose image it is; so that 'tis impossible a holy heart should be fully overcome with this temptation, having an argument beyond all the world of wick-

wicked men, and devils themselves to prove a Deity, viz. a new nature in him, *created after God in righteousness and true holiness*; by which, even when he is buffeted with atheistical injections, he saith in his heart there is a God, though Satan in the *Paroxysm* of the temptation, clouds his reasoning faculty for the present with this smoke of hell, which doth more offend and affright, than persuade his gracious heart to espouse such a principle, as it doth in a wicked man; who when on the contrary he is urged by his conscience to believe on God, *saith in his heart there is no God*; that is, he wisheth there were none; And this may exceedingly comfort a Saint (who notwithstanding such injections to Atheism, clings about God in his affections, and dares not for a world allow himself to sin against him; no not when most oppressed with this temptation) that he shall not passe for an Atheist in Gods account, whatever Satan makes him believe: As the wicked shall not be cleared from Atheism by their naked profession of a Deity, so long as those thoughts of God are so loose and weak, as not to command them into any obedience to his commands, *Psalm 36. 1. The transgression of the wicked, saith in mine heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes*; The holy Prophet argues from the wickedness of the sinners life, to the Atheism of his heart; so on the contrary, the holy life of a gracious person, saith in mine heart, that the fear of God is before his eye: it appears plainly that he believes a God, and reveres that God whom he believes to be. Well, though a gracious heart can never be overcome, yet he may be sadly haunted and disquieted with it. Now in the next place I am to shew you, how the Christian may quench this fiery dart, and that is by faith alone.

Quest. But what need of faith? will not reason serve the turn, to stop the Devils mouth in this point? cannot the eye of reason spy a Deity, except it look through the Spectacles of faith?

Ans. I grant, that this is a piece of natural divinity, and reason is able to demonstrate the being of a God; where the Scriptures never came, a Deity is acknowledged, *Micah 4. 5. All people will walk, every one in the Name of his God.* Where it is supposed, that every Nation owns some Deity, and hath a worship for that God they own; yet in a furious assault of temptation, 'tis faith alone,

Quest.

Ans.

alone, that is able to keep the field, and quench the fire of this dart.

1.

First, that light which reason affords, is dusky and confused, serving for little more than in general to shew there is a God; It will never tell, who, or what this God is. Till *Paul* brought the *Athenians* acquainted with the true God, how little of this first principle in Religion was known among them? though that City was then the very eye of the world for learning. And if the worlds eye was so dark, as not to know the God they worship'd; what then was the worlds darkness it self? those barbarous places, (I mean) which wanted all tillage and culture of humane literature, to advance and perfect their understandings. This is a Scripture notion, and so is the object of faith, rather than reason, *Heb. 11. 6. He that comes to God, must believe that he is; Mark that, he must believe; now faith goes upon the credit of the Word, and takes all upon trust from its authority; He must believe that he is, which as Master Perkins on the place saith, is not nakedly to know there is a God, but to know God to be a God; which reason of it self can never do; such is the blindness and corruption of our nature, that we have very deformed and misshapen thoughts of him, till with the eye of faith, we see his face in the glass of the Word, and therefore the same learned man is not afraid to affirm, that all men, who ever came of Adam (Christ alone excepted) are by nature Atheists, because at the same time that they acknowledge a God, they deny him his power, presence, and justice, and allow him to be only what pleareth themselves. Indeed it is natural for every man to desire to accommodate his lusts with such conceptions of God, as may be most favourable to, and suit best with them. God chargeth some for this, *Psal. 50. Thou thoughtst I was altogether such as thy self.* Sinners doing with God as the *Ethiopians* with *Angels*, whom they picture with black faces that they may be like themselves.*

2.

Secondly, suppose thou wert able by reason to demonstrate what God is, yet it were dangerous to enter the list, and dispute it out, by thy naked reason with Satan, who hath, though the worst cause, yet the nimbler head. There is more odds between thee and Satan (though the reason and understanding of many the ripest wits were met in thee,) than between the weakest idiot, and the greatest Scholar in the world. Now who would put a cause

of

of so great importance to such a hazard, as thou must do, by reasoning the point with him, that so far out-matches thee? but there is a divine authority in the Word, which faith builds on, and this hath a throne in the conscience of the devil himself; he sits at this: for which cause, Christ, though he was able by reason to have baffled the devil, yet to give us a pattern, what arms to use for our defence in our conflicts with Satan, he resells him only by lifting up the shield of the Word. *It is written, saith Christ, Luke 4. 4 and again, verse 8. It is written.* And it is very observable, how powerful the Word quoted by Christ was to *nonplus* the devil; so, that he had not a word to reply to any Scripture that was brought, but was taken off upon the very mention of the Word, and forc'd to go to another argument; Had Eve but stood to her first answer, *God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it,* Gen. 3. 3. she had been too hard for the devil; but letting her hand-hold go, which she had by faith on the Word, presently she fell into her enemies hand. Thus in this particular, when the Christian in the heat of temptation, by faith stands upon his defence, interposing the Word between him and Satans blows, I believe that God is, though I cannot comprehend his nature, nor answer thy sophistry; yet I believe the report the Word makes of God; Satan may trouble such a one, but he cannot hurt him; nay, 'tis probable he will not long trouble him; The devils antipathy is so great to the Word, that he loves not to hear it sound in his ear; but if thou throwest down the shield of the Word, and thinkest by the dint or force of thy reason to cut thy way through the temptation, thou mayest soon see thy self surrounded by thy subtle enemy, and put beyond an honourable retreat. This is the reason I conceive, why among those few which have professed themselves Atheists, most of them have been great pretenders to reason, such as have neglected the Word, and gone forth in the pride of their own understanding, by which (through the righteous judgement of God) they at last have disputed themselves into flat Atheism; while they have turn'd their back upon God and his Word, thought by digging into the secrets and bowels of nature, to be admired for their knowledge above others, that hath befallen them, which sometimes doth those in Mines, that delve too far into the bowels of the earth; a damp from Gods secret judgement hath come, to put out that light which at first they

they carried down with them ; and so that of the *Apostle* is verified on them, *Where is the disputer of the world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?* 1 Cor. 1. 21. Indeed, 'tis the wisdom of God, that the world by wisdom (their own trusted too) should know God.

Thirdly, he that assents to this truth, that there is a God, meerly upon grounds of reason, and not of faith, and rests in that, he doth not quench the temptation, for still he is an infidel, and a Scripture Atheist ; he doth not believe there is a God at the report of Gods Word, but at the report of his Reason, and so indeed he doth but believe himself, and not God, and in that makes himself a God, preferring the testimony of his own reason before the testimony of Gods Word, which is dangerous.

Quest.

Quest. But may some say, 'Is there no use of reason in such principles as this, which are within its sphere? may I not make use of my reason to confirm me in this truth, that there is a God?

Ans.

Ans. 'Tis beyond all doubt that there is, wherefore else did God set up such a light, if not to guide us? but it must keep its place, and that is to follow faith, not to be the ground of it, or to give Law and measure to it. Our faith must not depend on our reason, but our reason on our faith. I am not to believe what the Word saith, meerly because it jumps with my reason, but believe my reason, because 'tis sutable to the Word: The more perfect light is to rule the less; now the light of the Word which faith follows, is more clear and sure than reason is, or can be; for therefore it was written, because mans natural light was so defective; thou readest in the Word there is a God, and that he made the world; the eye of Reason sees this also, but thou layest the stress of thy faith on the Word, not on thy Reason; and so of other truths; The Carpenter layes his rule to the timber, and by his eye sees it to be right or crooked; yet it is not the eye but the rule that is the measure, without which his eye might fail him. All that I shall say more to such are annoyed with Atheistical injections, is this; fix thy faith strongly on the Word, by which you shall be able to overcome this *Goliath*; and when thou art more free, and composed, and the storm is over, thou shalt do well to back thy faith what thou canst with thy reason; let the Word (like *David's Stone*) in the sling of faith, first prostrate the temptation, and then, as he used *Goliath's sword*

to cut off his Head, so mayest thou, with more ease and safety make use of thy Reason to compleat the Victory over these Atheistical suggestions.



CHAP. XVIII.

*Of temptations to blasphemy, and how faith quen-
eth them, and defeats Satans double design.*

THE second fiery Darr, with which he affrights the Christian, is his temptation to blasphemy. Every sin in a large sense is blasphemy; but here we take it more strictly. When a man does, speaks, or thinks any thing derogatory to the holy Nature or Works of God, with an intent to reproach him or his wayes; This properly is blasphemy. *Jobs* Wife was the Devils Solicitor, to provoke her Husband to this sin; *Curse God*, (saith she) *and dye*: The Devil was so impudent, to assault Christ himself with this sin, when he bade him, *Fall down and worship him*; but he hath an advantage of making a nearer approach to a Saint than he had to Christ. All that he could do to him, *was to offend his holy ear with an external motion. It would not stand with the dignity or holinesse of Christs Person, to let him come any further; but he can shoot this fiery dart into the imagination of a Saint, to the great disturbance of his thoughts, endeavouring thereby to stir up some unworthy thoughts of God in him: Though these commonly are no more welcom to a gracious Soul, than the Frogs which crept into the Bed-chamber of *Pharaoh*, were to him. Two things Satan aims at by these injections: *First*, to set the Saint a defaming God, which he loves a life to hear; but if this fails, then, *Secondly*,

he is content to play at lower game, and intends the Christians vexation, by forcing these unweelcome guests upon him. Now faith, and only faith can only quench these fire-balls in both respects.

1.

First, Faith is able to defeat Satans first plot, by keeping the soul from entertaining any unbecoming or blasphemous thoughts of God, and none but faith can do this. There is a natural disposition in every wicked man to blaspheme God. Let God but cross a carnal wretch in his way, and then suffer Satan to edge his corruption, and he will soon flie in Gods face; If the Devils supposition had been true (as it was indeed, most false) that *Job* was an Hypocrite; then that tale which he brought against him to God, would have been true also. *Put forth now thy hand, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face*, *Job* 1. 11. Had *Job* been the man he took him for, the Devil had not lyed; because 'tis natural to every wicked man, to have base thoughts of God; and when provoked, the inward rancour of his heart, will appear in the foulness of his tongue. *This evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?* 2 Kings 6. 33. A loud blasphemy, the seed of which is found in every unbeliever. There is but one spirit of wickedness in sinners, as but one Spirit of grace in Saints. *Peter* tells *Simon Magus*, *He was in the gall of bitterness*, *Acts* 8. 23. That is, in a state of sin: every unbeliever is of a bitter spirit against God, and all that bears his Name; there's no trusting of the tameist of them all, though coop'd up by restraining grace: Let the Lyon out of his Grate, and he will soon shew his bloody nature. An unbeliever hath no more in him to quench such a temptation, than dry wood hath to quench the fire that is put to it. But, now let us see what exploits faith can do in quenching this fiery darr, and how faith does it.

2.

First, Faith sets God before the soul, within sight and hearing of all its thoughts and wayes, and this keeps the soul in awe, that it dares harbour nothing unworthy of God in its most secret thoughts. *David* gives the reason why the wicked are so bold, *Psal.* 85. 14. *They have not set thee before them*. Such as defame and asperie the names of others, do it commonly behind their backs: Sin in this life seldom comes to such a ripeness, as to blaspheme God to his face; this is properly the language

guage

guage of Hell. There is a mixture of Atheism, with the blasphemy of sinners while on Earth: They do with God, as those wretched Miscreants did with Christ; they cover his face, & then smite him: they draw a Curtain by some Atheistical principles betwixt God and them, and then they belch out their blasphemies against that God, whose Omniscience they do not believe. Now faith eyes God eying the soul, and so preserves it. *Curse not the King: (saith Solomon). no, nor in thy thought, nor the rich in thy bed-chamber, for a bird of the air shall carry the voyce, and that which hath wings, shall tell the matter, Eccl. 10. 20.* Such kind of language faith useth. Blaspheme not (saith faith) O my soul, the God of Heaven; thou canst not whisper it so softly, but the voyce is heard in his ear, who is nearer to thee, than thou to thy self: and thus it breaks the snare the Devil layes. Those unbecoming speeches which drop't from *Jobs* mouth, through the length and extremity of his troubles, though they did not amount to blasphemy, yet when God presented himself to him in his Majesty, they soon vanished, and he covered his face with shame before the Lord for them; *Now mine eyes see thee, wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes, Job 42. 5, 6.*

Secondly, Faith credits no report of God, but from Gods own mouth; and thus it quencheth temptations to blasphemy. 'Tis impossible a soul should have any but holy and loyal thoughts of God, who shapes his apprehensions of him by the Word of God, which is the only true Glasse to behold God in, because it alone presents him like himself in all his Attributes, which Satan by this sin of blasphemy one way or other asperses. Faith conceives its notions of God by the Word, resolves all cases of Conscience, and deciphers all Providences (which God writes in mysterious figures) by the Word; for want of which skill, Satan drives the creature very oft to have hard thoughts of God, because he cannot make presently good sense of his administrations in the world. Thus there have been, who foolishly have charged Gods Justice, because some outrageous sinners have not been overtaken with such speedy judgment, as they deserve; others have charg'd as deeply his care and faithfulness, in providing no better for his servants, whom they have seen kept long under the hatches of great afflictions; like him, that seeing a company of

Christians in poor ragged cloaths, said, He would not serve that God, who kept his Servants no better. These, and such like, are the broken Glasses that Satan presents God in, that he may disfigure him to the creatures eye; and truly, if we will look no further, but judge God to be, what he appears to be by them, we shall soon condemn the Holy One, and be within the whirl of this dangerous temptation.

3.

Thirdly, Faith quenches temptations to blasphemy as it is praiseful. It disposeth the Christian, to bless God in the saddest condition that can befall it. Now these two, blessing and blasphemy are most contrary; By the one we think and speak evil, and by the other, good of God; and therefore cannot well dwell under the same Roof: They are like contrary Tunes, they cannot be plaid on the same instrument, without changing all the strings. It is past Satans skill to strike so harsh a stroak as blasphemy is, on a soul tuned and set to praise God; Now faith doth this. *My heart is fixed* (saith *David*) there was his faith; then follows, *I will sing and give praise*, Psal. 57. 7. It was faith that tuned his spirit, and set his affections praise-way. And would not Satan (think you) have found it a hard task to have made *David* blaspheme God, while his heart was kept in a praising-frame? Now, two wayes faith doth this. *First*, As it spies mercy in the greatest affliction, an eye of white in the saddest mixture of Providence; so that when the Devil provokes to blasphemy from the evil that the creature receives from God, faith shews more good received than evil; Thus *Job* quenched this Dart, which Satan shot at him from his Wives tongue. *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall not we receive evil? Shall a few present troubles be a Grave to bury the remembrance of all my past and present mercies? Thou speak'st as one of the foolish women*: What God takes from me is less than I owe him; but what he leaves me is more than he owes me. *Solomon* bids us, *In the day of adversity consider*, Eccl. 7. 14. Our unbecoming thoughts and words of God, are the product of a rash hasty spirit. Now faith is a considering grace; *He that believes will not make haste*, no not to think or speak of God. Faith hath a good memory, and can tell the Christian many stories of ancient mercies; and when his present meal falls short, it can entertain the Soul with a cold Dish, and not complain that God keeps a bad

bad House neither. Thus *David*, recovered himself, when he was even tumbling down the Hill of temptation. *This is my infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High, I will remember the works of the Lord, surely I will remember thy wonders of old, Psal. 77. 10, 11.* Therefore Christian, when thou art in thy depths of affliction, and Satan tempts thee to asperse God, as if he were forgetful of thee, stop his mouth with this, *No Satan, God hath not forgot to do for me, but I have forgot what he hath done for me, or else I could not question his fatherly care at present over me*; Go Christian, play over thy old Lessons, praise God for past mercies, and it will not be long before thou hast a new Song put into thy mouth for present mercy. Secondly, As faith spies mercy in every affliction, so it keeps up an expectation in the Soul for more mercy; which confidence disposeth the Soul to praise God for, as if the mercy were then in being. *Daniel*, when in the very shadow of death, the plot laid to take away his life, *three times a day he pray'd, and gave thanks before his God.* To have heard him pray in that great streight, would not have afforded so much matter of wonder; but to have his heart in tune for thanksgiving in such a sad hour, this was admirable, and his faith enabled him, *Dan. 6. 10.* Mercy in the Promise, is as the Apple in the seed; faith sees it growing up, the mercy a coming. Now a Soul under expectation of deliverance, how will it scorn a blasphemous motion? when relief is known to be on its way for a Garrison besieged, it raiseth their spirits; they will not then hearken to the traiterous motion of the Enemy. 'Tis when unbelief is the Counsellor, and the Soul under doubts and suspicions of Gods heart to it, that Satan finds welcome upon such an Errand, an excellent instance for both we have in one Chapter, *Isa. 8.* We find, *ver. 17.* what is the effect of faith, and that is a chearful waiting on God in straits. *I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him, and ver. 21.* We have the fruit of unbelief, and that is no less than blasphemy: *And it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their King, and their God, and look upward.* Faith keeps the Believer in a waiting posture; and unbelief sets the sinner a cursing both God and man. None escapes his lash, that crossteth him in his way, no not God himself.

Fourthly,

4.

Fourthly, Faith quenches this fiery dart, by purifying the heart of that enmity against God, which in mans corrupt nature is fuel for such a temptation. *Back-biters, haters of God, and despightful*, are joyned together, *Rom. 1. 30.* No wonder, that a man whose spirit is full of rancour against another, should be easily perswaded to revile him he hates so much. Every unbeliever is a hater of God, and so is in a disposition to blaspheme God, when his will or lust is crossed by God. But faith slayes this enmity of the heart, yea, it works love in the soul to God, and then works by this love. Now it is one property of love, *To think no evil*, 1 Cor. 13. 5. That is, a man will neither plot any evil against him he loves; nor easily suspect any evil to be plotted by him against himself. Love reads the actions of a friend through such clear Spectacles of candour and ingenuity, as will make a dark Print seem a fair Character; It interprets all he doth, with so much sweetness and simplicity, that those passages in his behaviour towards her, which, to another would seem intricate and suspicious, are plain and pleasing to her; because she ever puts the most favourable sense upon all he doth that is possible. The Believer dares not himself plot any evil of sin against God, whom (from the Report that faith hath made of him to his soul) he loves so dearly. And as love will not suffer him to turn Traytor against a good God, so neither will it suffer him to harbour any jealous thoughts of Gods heart towards him; as if he, who was the first lover, and taught the soul to love him, by making love to her, could after all this, frame any plot of real unkindness against it. No, this thought, though Satan may force it in a manner upon the Christian, and violently press for his entertainment, under the advantage of some frowning Providence (which seems to countenance such a suspicion) yet it can never find welcome, so far as to be credited in the soul, where love to God hath any thing to do. And surely there is no fear, that soul will be perswaded wickedly to belch out blasphemies against God, who so abominates but the surmising the least suspicion of God in her most secret thoughts.

2.

The second design Satan hath in these blasphemous temptations, is the Christians trouble and vexation. Though he doth not find the Christian so kind, as to take these his Quests in, and give them lodging for his sake, yet he knows, it will not a little disturb,

disturb and break his rest, to have them continually knocking and rapping at his door; yea, when he cannot pollute the Christian by obtaining his consent to them; even then he hopes to create him no little disquiet and distraction, by accusing him for what he will not commit; and so of a defiler (which rather he would have been) he is forced to turn slanderous Reviler and false Accuser. Thus the whore sometimes accuseth the honest man, meerly to be revenged on him, because he will not yield to satisfy her lust. *Joseph* would not lie with his *Mistress*, and she raiseth a horrible ly on him. The Devil is the Blasphemer, but the poor Christian (because he will not joyn with him in the Fact) shall have the name, and bear the blame of it. As the *Jews* compelled *Simon of Cyrene* to carry Christs Cross, so Satan would compel the tempted Christian, to carry the guilt of his sin for him. And many times he doth so handsomly, and with such slight of hand shift it from himself to the Christians back, that he poor creature, perceives not the Juglers Art of conveighing it unto him, but goes complaining only of the baseness of his own heart. And as it sometimes so falls out, that a true man, in whose House stolen goods are found, suffers, because he cannot find out the Thief that left them there. So the Christian suffers many sad terrors from the meer presence of these horrid thoughts in his bosom, because he is not able to say, whose they are; whether shot in by Satan, or the steaming forth of his own naughty heart. The humble Christian is prone to fear the worst of himself, even where he is not conscious to himself. Like the *Patriarchs*, who when the Cup was found in *Benjamins* Sack, took the blame to themselves, though they were innocent in the fact. And such is the confusion sometimes in the Christians thoughts, that he is ready to charge himself with those brats, that should be laid at another door. Satans, I mean. Now here I shall shew you how faith defeateth this second design of the Devil in these blasphemous motions. And this it doth two ways. First, by helping the Christian to discern Satans injections from the motions of his own heart. Secondly, by succouring him, though they rise of his own heart.

First, Faith teaches the Christian to discern, and distinguish those fire-balls of temptations, which are thrown in at his window by Satan; from those sparks of corruption, which flie from his own

own Hearth, and take fire at his own sinful heart. And certainly, those blasphemous thoughts, of which many gracious Souls make such sad complaint, will be found very often of the former sort, as may the more probably appear, if we consider; The time when they first stir and are most busie; The manner how they come; and lastly, the effect they have on the Christians heart.

i.

First, The time when they begin to stir, and the Soul to be haunted with them; and that is ordinarily, when the work of conversion hath newly passed, or is passing upon him; when the creature falls off from his old sinful course, to embrace Christ, and declares for him against sin and Satan; This is the time when these blasphemous suggestions begin to make their apparition, and these vermin are seen to crawl in the Christians bosom; a strong probability that they do not breed there, but are sent from Satan by way of Revenge for the Souls Revolt from him; The Devil dealing by the Christian in this, not much unlike to what his own sworn Servants (Witches I mean) are known to do, who to expresse their spite against those that crosse them, sometimes cause them to swarm with Lice, or such kind of vermin, to make them loathsome to themselves; And as one that never found such vermin crawling about him before, might well wonder to see himself so suddenly stocked with a multitude of them; yea, might rather impute it to the Witches malice, than to the corruption of his own body that bred them. So in this case. Indeed 'tis very improbable to think, that the creature should in this juncture of time above all, fall so foul with God by sinning against him, at such a height as this; it is likely, that he can, while he is in tears for the sins of his past life, commit a greater than any of them he mourns for? Or, that he dare, while he is crying for pardoning mercy with a trembling heart, block up the way to his own prayers, and harden Gods heart into a denial of them, by such horrid sins as these are? In a word, seems it not strange, that all the while he was a stranger to, yea, an Enemy against God, he durst not venture on this sin for the prodigious nature of it, and that now he begins to love God, those blasphemies should fit his mouth, which were too big and horrid before for him to meddle with.

Secondly, The manner how these blasphemies rise in the Christians

Christians thoughts, will encrease the probability, that they are injections from Satan without, rather than motions of the Christians own heart within. They are commonly violent and sudden; they come like lightning, flashing into the Christians thoughts, before he hath time to deliberate with himself what he is doing; whereas that lust, which is the ebullition of our own hearts, is ordinarily gradual in its motion; it moves in a way more still and subtle to mans nature; it doth entice the Soul, and by degrees slightly enveagles it into a consent; making first the affections on its side, which then it employeth to corrupt the understanding, and take it off from appearing against it (by putting its eye out with some bribe of sensual pleasure and profit) and so, by these paces it comes at last to have a more easie access to, and success over the will; which being now deprived of her Guard, yields the sooner to the Summons that lust makes. But these sudden dartings of blasphemous thoughts, they make a forcible entry upon the Soul, without any application used to gain its good will to come in; their driving is like the driving of that hellish *Jehu*, it is the Devil that is got into the Box, who else could drive so furiously? yea, not only their suddenness and violence, but incoherence with the Christians former thoughts and course, do still heighten the probability, that they are darts shot from the Devils bowe. *Peter* was once known to be of Christs company by his voyce: *Thy speech* (say they) *bewrayeth thee*; he spake like them, therefore was judged one of them; on the contrary, we may say of these blasphemous motions, They are not the Christians; their language bewrayes them to be rather the belching of a Devil, than the voyce of a Saint. If they were woven by the Soul, they would be something like the whole piece, from which they are cut off. There is ordinarily a dependency in our thoughts, we take the hint from one thought for another; as Circle riseth out of Circle in the moved water, so doth thought out of thought, till they spread into a Discourse. Now, may not the Christian well wonder to see, may be when he is at the worship of God, and taken up with holy and heavenly meditations, a blasphemous thought on a sudden appear in the midst of such company, to which it is so great a stranger? and also how it should get in among them? if a holy thought surprizeth us on a sudden, when we stand as it were with our back on Heaven, and there be nothing in the Discourse our hearts at present are hold-

ing, to usher it in, we may take it as a pure motion of the Spirit of Christ; who indeed but he, could be so soon in the midst of the Soul, when the door is shut, even before the creature can turn his thoughts to open it for him? And probably these blasphemies which rush upon thee, O Christian, at a time, when thy Soul is at the farthest distance from such thoughts, yea, sailing to the clean contrary point, in thy praying to, and praising of God, are the irruptions of that wicked one, and that on purpose to interrupt thee in that work, which of all other he fears and hates most.

3.

Thirdly, The effect these blasphemous notions have on the heart, may make us think they are Satans brats, rather than the birth of the Christians own heart: And that is a dismal horror and consternation of the Christians spirit, which reacheth often to the discomposure of the body. So that an apparition of the Devil to their bodily eyes, could not affright them more, than these blasphemies do, that walk in their imagination. Yea, they do not only cause an horror, but stir up a vehement indignation and abhorrency in the soul at their presence. If, now they be the birth of the Christians own heart, why this horror? whence this indignation? those motions which arise from our selves, use to please us better. It is natural for men to love the children of their own loins, though black and deformed; and as natural, to like the conceptions of their own minds. *Solomon* found out the true mother, by her tenderesse to the child. If these blasphemies were the issue of the heart, familiarity with them might be expected, rather than horror at the sight of them; favour to them, rather than abhorrency of them; were it not more likely (poor soul) that thou wouldst kiss them (if thy own) than seek to kill them? draw out thy breast to nurse and suckle them, than the Sword of the Spirit to destroy them? And if so (saith faith) that these be Satans brats, why then art thou troubled because he layes them at thy door? Is the chaste Woman the more Whore, because some foul tongue calls her so? Have patience a little poor soul, the Judge is at the door, and when he comes, thou shalt be called by thy right name. Sit not thou any longer wounding thy soul with his dart, and troubling thy self for the Devils sin, but go and complain of him to thy God: And when thou hast spread his blasphemies before the Lord, as *Hezekiah*

kiah did *Rabshekahs*; comfort thy self with this, that God will spread thy cause against this false accuser, and send him away with as much shame, and as little success, as he did that barking Dog, who so reviled God, and rail'd on his people.

But secondly, Suppose these blasphemous motions, be the Christians own sins, bred in his own heart, and not the Devils brats falsely fathered on him; yet here faith relieves the Christian, when distressed with the guilt of them, and Satan labours most to aggravate them. Now the succour faith brings the soul here, is manifold.

Faith can assure the soul upon solid Scripture-bottom, that these blasphemous thoughts are pardonable, *Mat. 12. 31. All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.* And it were strange, if thy fancy should be so wild and melancholly, as to think thou seest this only unpardonable blasphemy (which is ever markt on the forehead with final impenitency and desperate hatred against God) in those loose roving thoughts, that never yet could gain any consent from thy heart to them, but continues to disavow, and protest against them. I say it were very strange that thou couldst long mistake those unwelcome guests for that wicked sin. Now for thy comfort, thou hearest all manner of blasphemy besides that one, shall be forgiven; a pardon for them may be sued out in the Court of mercy, how terrible and amazing forever their circumstances are to thy trembling soul, and if the creature believes this, Satans dart is quench'd; for his design is to make use of these temptations as a trap-door, by which he may let thy soul down into despair.

Faith resolves the soul, that the ebullition of such thoughts is not inconsistent with the state of grace; and if the soul be well satisfied in this point, the Devil's fiery dart hath lost its envenom'd Head, which uses so much to drink up the Christians spirits. The common inference which he makes tempted souls draw from the presence of these thoughts in them, is, surely I am not a Saint; This is not the spot of Gods children; but faith is able to disprove this, and challenges Satan to shew (as well read as he is in the Scriptures) one place in all the Bible, that countenanceth such a conclusion. Indeed there is none. It is true, the blasphemy of blasphemies (I mean the sin against the Holy Ghost) with this

the evil one shall never touch a true Believer; but I know no kind of sin, short of that, from which he hath any such protection, or immunity, as makes it impossible he should for a time be foyled by it. The whole body of sin indeed is weakned in every believer, and a deadly wound given by the grace of God to his corrupt nature, which it shall never claw off, but at last dye by it. Yet as a dying Tree may bear some fruit, though not so much, nor that so full, and ripe, as before; as a dying man may move his limbs, though not so strongly as when he was in health; so original corruption in a Saint will be stirring, though but feebly; and shewing its fruit, though it be but crumpled and unripe; and thou hast no cause to be discouraged, that it stirs; but to be comforted that it can but stir. O be thankful thou hast got thy Enemy, who even now was Master of the field, and had thee ryed to his triumphant Chariot, now himself on his knees, under the victorious Sword of Christ and his grace, ready to drop into his Grave, though lifting up his hand against thee to shew his enmity continues, when his power fails to do execution as he would.

3. Thirdly, Faith can clear it to the Soul, that these blasphemous thoughts, as they are commonly entertained in a Saint, are not so great sins in Gods account, as some other, that pass for less in our account. The Christian commonly contrasts more guilt, by a few proud, unclean, covetous thoughts, than by many blasphemous; because the Christian seldom gets so clear a Victory over those, as over these of blasphemy. The fiery darts of blasphemy may scare the Christian more, but fiery lusts wound sooner and deeper. It was the warm Sun made the Travellor open his Cloak, which the blustering wind made wrap closer to him. Temptations of pleasure entice the heart to them; whereas the horrid nature of the other, stirs up the Christian to a more valiant resistance of them. O the Christian is soon overtaken with these, they are like poyson in sweet Wine, they are down before he is aware, and do diffuse apace into his affections, poysoning the Christians spirits; but these of blasphemy are like poyson in some bitter potion, either it is spit out before it is down, or vomited up by the Christian before it hath spread it self far into his affections. Sins are great or small, by the share the will hath in the acting of them, and blasphemous thoughts commonly having less.

less of the Christians will and affections in them, than the other, cannot be a greater sin.

Fourthly, Faith tells the Soul that God may have, yea, undoubtedly hath gracious ends in suffering him to be haunted with such troublesome Guests, or else they should not be sent to quarter on him. Possibly, God saw some other sin thou wert in great danger of, and he sends Satan to trouble thee with these temptations, that he may not overcome thee in the other. And though a playster or poultice be very offensive, and loathsome, yet better endure that awhile, than a disease, which will hazard thy life. Better tremble at the sight of blasphemous thoughts, than strut thyself in the pride of thy heart at the sight of thy gifts and privileges. The first will make thee think thyself as vile as the Devil himself in thy own eyes; but the other will make thee prodigiously wicked, and so indeed like the Devil in Gods eyes.

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Faith will put the Christian on some noble exploits for God, thereby to vindicate himself, and prove the Devils charge a lye; as one that is accused for some traiterous Design against his Prince, to wipe off that calumny, doth undertake some notable enterprise for the honour of his Prince. This indeed is the fullest revenge the Christian can take, either of Satan for troubling him with such injections, or his own heart for issuing out such impure streams. When *David* prefer'd *Saul's* life in the Cave above a Kingdom, which one hearty blow might have procured him; he proved all his Enemies lyars that had brought him under a suspicion at Court; Thus Christian, do thou by the honour of God, when it cometh in competition with sin and self; and thou wilt stop the Devils mouth, who sometimes is ready to make thee jealous of thyself, as if thou wert a blasphemer. Such heroic acts of zeal and self-denial, would speak more for thy purgation before God and thy own Conscience, than these sudden thoughts can do against thee.



CHAP. XIX.

The third fiery dart of despair, and the chief argument which Satan urgeth most upon souls to drive them into it (taken from the greatness of sin) refelled, as also the first answer with which faith furnisbeth the soul for this purpose.

THE third fiery dart which Satan lets flie at the Christian, is, his temptation to despair. This curled Fiend thinks he can neither revenge himself further on God, nor engrave his own image deeper on the creature, than by this sin; which at once casteth the greatest scorn upon God, and brings the creature nearest the complexion of Devils and damned Souls; who by lying continually under the scorching wrath of God, in Hells horrid zone, are black't all over with despair. This is the sin, that of all Satan chiefly aims at; other sins are but as previous dispositions to introduce that, and make the creature more receptive for such a temptation. As the wooll hath a tincture of some lighter colours given it, before it can be dyed into a deep grain; so Satan hath his more lightsome and pleasant sins, which he at first entices to, that he may the better dispose the creature to this; but this is kept by him as a great secret from the creatures knowledge. The Devil is too cunning a fowler, to lay his net in the Birds sight he means to take; despair is the net, other sins are but the shrapp, whereby he covers it, and so flatters them into it; which done, he hath them safe to eternity. This above all sins, puts a man into a kind of actual possession of Hell. Other sins bind over to wrath, but this gives fire to the threatening
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and sets the Soul on a light flame with horror. As it is faiths excellency to give a being to the word of promise; so it is the cruelty of despair, that it gives an existence to the torments of Hell in the Conscience. This is the Arrow that drinks up the spirit, and makes the creature Executioner to it self. Despair puts a Soul beyond all Relief; the offer of a pardon comes too late to him that hath turn'd himself off the Ladder. Other temptations have their way to escape; faith and hope can open a window to let out the smoke that offends the Christian in any condition, be it at present never so sad and sorrowful; but then the Soul must needs be choaked, when it is shut up within the despairing thoughts of its own sins, and no crevis of hope left, to be an out-let to any of that horror with which they fill him.

SECT. I.

I might here instance in those many *Media's* or Arguments Satan useth to dispute Souls into despair from; and how able faith, and only faith is, to answer and refel them; but I shall content my self with one to dilate upon; which is the chief of all Satans strength, and that is taken from the greatnesse and multitude of the creatures sins; which when it is enlightned to see, and hath the brawninesse of its Conscience pared off, to feel with remorse, and then, God do but allow Satan to use his Rhetorick in declaiming against the hainousnesse of them; the poor creature must needs be in a dolefull condition, and of necessity sink into the depths of despair, for all the help it can find from it self within, or any other creature without doors. Perhaps some of you (who have sleightry thoughts of your own sins) think it proves but a childish impotent spirit in others, to be so troubled for theirs; and in this you shew that you never were in Satans flocks, pinched by his temptations; those who have, will speak in another language; and tell you, that the sins which are unfelt by you, have layen like a Mountain of Lead upon their spirits. O, when a breach is once made in the Conscience, and the waves of guilt poure in amain upon the Soul, it soon overtops all the creatures shifts and apologies, as the flood did the old world,

world, that covered the tallest Trees and highest Mountains : As nothing then was visible but Sea and Heaven ; so in such a Soul, nothing but sin and Hell ; his sins stare him in the face, as with the eyes of so many Devils, ready to drag him into the bottomlesse Pit ; every filly Flie dares creep upon the Lyon while asleep ; whose voyce all the Beasts in the Forrest trembles at, when he awakes. Fools can make a mock of sin, when consciences eye is out, or shut, they can then dance about it, as the *Philistines* about blind *Sampson* ; but when God arms sin with guilt, and causeth this Serpent to put forth his sting upon the Conscience, then the proudest sinner of them all flie before it. Now it is faith that alone can grapple with sin in its strength ; which it doth several wayes.

SECT. II.

1.

First, Faith gives the Soul a view of the great God. It teacheth the Soul to set his Almightyesse against sins magnitude, and his infinitude against sins multitude ; and so quencherh the temptation. The Reason why the presumptuous sinner fears so little, and the despairing Soul so much, is for want of knowing God as great ; therefore to cure them both, the serious consideration of God under this notion is propounded, *Psal. 46. 10. Be still, and know that I am God* : As if he had said, Know, O ye wicked, that I am God, who can avenge my self when I please, upon you, and cease to provoke me by your sins to your own confusion. Again, Know ye trembling Souls, *that I am God*, and therefore able to pardon the greatest sins, and cease to dishonour me by your unbelieving thoughts of me. Now faith alone can thus shew God to be God. *Two things* are required to the right conceiving of God. *First*, We must give him the infinitude of all his Attributes, that is, conceive of him not only as wise, for that may be a mans name, but infinitely wise ; not mighty, but Almighty, &c.

2.

Secondly, This infinitude which we give to God, we must deny to all besides him, what, or whatsoever they be. Now faith alone can realize and fix this principle so in the heart, that the creature shall

shall act suitably thereunto; indeed none so wicked, who will not say, (if you will believe them) that they believe God is infinite in his knowledge, and Omnipresent at their heels, wherever they go: infinite in his power, needing no more to effect their ruine, than his speaking it; but would they then in the view of these, go and sin so boldly? They durst as well run their heads into a fiery Oven, as do it in the face of such a principle. So others, they believe God is infinite in mercy, but, would they then carry a hell flaming in their bosomes with despair, while they have infinite mercy in their eye? No, 'tis plain, God appears not in his true greatnesse to such. Despair robs God of his infinitude, and ascribes it to sin; By it the creature saith, his sin is infinite, and God is not; too like those unbelieving *Israelites*, Psal. 106. 7. *They remembered not the multitude of his mercies, but provoked him at the sea, even at the red sea;* they could not see enough in God to serve their turn at such a strait; they saw a multitude of *Egyptians* to kill, and multitude of waters to drown them, but could not see multitude enough of mercies to deliver them: Thus the despairing soul sees multitude of great sins to damn, but not an infinitude of mercy in the great God to save him. Reason alas, is low of stature, like *Zaccheus*, and cannot see mercy in a crowd and presse of sins; 'Tis faith alone that climbs the Promise; then, and not till then will the soul see *Jesus*, faith ascribes mercy to God with an *overflow*, Isa. 55. 7. *He will abundantly pardon: multiply to pardon, so the Hebr.* He will drop pardons with our sins, which are most, *He will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.* This is faiths language: he will pardon with an over-flowing mercy; cast a stone into the sea, and 'tis not barely covered, but buried many fathom deep. God will pardon thy greatest sins (saith faith) as the sea doth a little pebble thrown into it; a few sins poured out upon the conscience, (like a pail of water spilt on the ground) seems a great flood; but the greatest poured into the sea of Gods mercy, are swallowed up and not seen. Thus, *when the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, (the Scripture saith) there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, they shall not be found.* And why so? for *I will pardon*, there is the reason, Jer. 50. 20.

SECT. III.

Object.

O but saith the trembling soul, the consideration of Gods infinitude, especially in two of his Attributes, drives me safest to despair; Of all other my perplexed thoughts, when I think, how infinitely holy God is, may I not fear what will become of me an unholy wretch? when again I look upon him as just, yea, infinitely just, how can I think he will remit so great wrongs as I have done to his glorious Name?

Answer.

Faith will, and none but faiths fingers can untye this knot, and give a soul a satisfactory answer to this question. And first for the first Attribute, The Holiness of God.

1.

Faith hath two things to answer. *First*, that though the infinite holiness of Gods nature doth make him vehemently hate sin, yet the same doth strongly encline his heart to shew mercy to sinners. What is it in the creature, that makes him hard-hearted but sin? *The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel*, Prov. 12.10. if wicked, then cruel; and the more holy, the more merciful; hence it is, that acts of mercy and forgiveness, are with so much difficulty drawn (many times) from those that are Saints, even like milk out of a warded breast; because there are remainders of corruption in them, which cause some to have hardness of heart, and unwillingness to that work; *Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good*, saith the Apostle, Rom. 12.21. implying, it is a hard work which cannot be done, till a victory be got over the Christians own heart; who hath contrary passions, that will strongly oppose such an act. How oft, alas, do we hear such language as this, from those that are gracious? my patience is spent; I can bear no longer, and forgive no more: but God, who is purity without dross; holiness, without the least alloy and mixture of sin, hath nothing to sour his heart into any unmercifulness. *If ye, being evil, (saith Christ) know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more, shall your Father which is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask him?* Mat. 7. 11. Christs design in this place, is to help them to larger apprehensions concerning the mercifulness of Gods heart;

heart; which that he may do, he directs them to the thoughts of his holiness, as that which would infallibly demonstrate the same. As if Christ had said, Can you persuade your hearts, (distempered with sinful passions) to be kind to your children? how much more easy is it to think, that God who is holiness itself, will be so to his poor creatures, prostrate at his feet for mercy?

Secondly, faith can tell the soul, that the holiness of God is no enemy to pardoning-mercy; for 'tis the holiness of God, that obligeth him to be faithful in all his Promises; and this indeed, is as full a breast of consolation, as I know any, to a poor trembling soul: when the doubting soul reads those many precious Promises which are made to returning sinners; why doth he not take comfort in them? surely, it is because the truth and faithfulness of God to perform them, is yet under some dispute in his soul. Now, the strongest Argument that faith hath, to put this question out of doubt, and make the sinner accept the Promise as a true and faithful Word, is that which is taken from the holiness of God, who is the Promise-maker. It must be true (saith faith) what the Promise speaks; it can be no other, because a holy God makes it; Therefore God, to gain the more credit to the truth of his Promise, in the thoughts of his people, prefixeth so often this Attribute to his Promise, *I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel*, Isa. 41. 14. That which in the Hebrew is *Mercies*, in the Septuagint is often *ἁγία, Holy things*. See Isa. 55. 3. Indeed the mercies of God are founded in holiness, and therefore are sure mercies. The reason of mans unfaithfulness in Promises, proceeds from some unholiness in his heart; the more holy a man is, the more faithful we may expect him to be; a good man (we say) will be as good as his word; to be sure a good God will. How many times did *Laban* change *Jacob's* wages after Promise? but Gods Covenant with him was inviolably kept, though *Jacob* was not so faithful on his part as he ought; And why? but because he had to do with a holy God in this; but with a sinful man in the other; whose passions altered his thoughts, and changed his countenance towards him; as we see the clouds and wind do the face of the heavens, and temper of the seasons.

We come to the second Attribute, which scares the tempted

soul, and seems so little to befriend this pardoning Act of Gods mercy. And that is, his *Justice*, which proves often matter of amazement to the awakened sinner, rather than encouragement, especially when the serious thoughts of it possess his heart; Indeed (my brethren) the naked consideration of this Attribute, (rent from the other), and the musing on it, without a Gospel-Comment, through which alone it can be safely and comfortably viewed by a sin-smitten soul) must needs appale and dispirit him whoever he be, yea, kindle a fire of horreur in his bosom: for the creature seeing no way that God hath to vindicate his provoked justice, but by the eternal destruction and damnation of the sinner, cannot without an universal consternation of all the powers of his soul, think of that Attribute, which brings to his thoughts so fearful an expectation and looking for of judgement. *Heman*, though a holy man, yet even lost his wits with musing on this sad subject, *Psal.* 88. 15, 16. *While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted.* But faith can make good work of this also; faith will enable the soul to walk in this fiery Attribute, with his comforts unsinged, as those three Worthies, *Dan.* 3. did in the flaming furnace; while unbelieving sinners are scorched, yea, swallowed up into despair, when they do but come in their thoughts near the mouth of it. There is a threefold consideration with which faith relieves the soul, when the terrour of this Attribute takes hold on it.

SECT. IV.

1. *First*, faith shews, (and this upon the best evidence) that God may pardon the greatest sinner, if penitent and believing, without the least prejudice to his justice.

2. *Secondly*, faith goes further, and shews, that God in pardoning the believing sinner, doth not only save his justice, but advance the honour of it.

3. *Thirdly*, that God doth not only save and advance his justice in pardoning a believing soul; but (as things stand now,) he hath no other way to secure his justice, but by pardoning the believing soul his sins, be they never so great. These three well

well digested, will render this Attribute as amiable, lovely, and comfortable to the thoughts of a believer, as that of mercy it self.

First, of the first, *faith shews*, (and that upon the best evidence,) that God may pardon its sins, though never so great and mountainous, with safety to the justice of God. That question is not now to be disputed, whether God can be just and righteous in pardoning sinners. This (*faith faith*) was debated and determined long ago, at the Counsel-board of heaven by God himself, before so much as a vote, yea, a thought, could pass from Gods heart for the benefit of poor sinners; God expresseth thus much in the Promise, *Hosea 2. 19. I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgement.* Who is this that God means to marry? one that had played the whore, as appears by the former part of the chapter. What doth he mean by betrothing? no other, but that he will pardon their sins, and receive them into the arms of his love and peculiar favour: but how can the righteous God take one that hath been a filthy strumpet, into his bosome? betroth such a whorish people, pardon such high climbing sins? how? Mark, *He will do it in judgement and in righteousness.* As if God had said, Trouble not your thoughts to clear my justice in the act; I know what I do; the Case is well weighed by me. It is not like the sudden matches that are huddled up by men in one day, and repented of on the next? But is the result of the Counsel of my holy Will so to do. Now when Satan comes full mouth against the believer with this objection, What, such a wretch as thou find favour in the eyes of God? *faith* can easily retort. Yes Satan, God can be as righteous in pardoning me, as in damning thee. God tells me, 'Tis in judgement and in righteousness. I leave thee therefore to dispute this case out with God, who is able to justify his own act. Now, though this in the lump were enough to refute Satan, yet *faith* is provided with a more particular evidence, for the vindication of the justice and righteousness of God in this his pardoning act. And this is founded on the full satisfaction which Christ hath given to God for all the wrong the believer hath done him by his sin. Indeed, it was the great undertaking of Christ, to bring Justice to kiss Mercy; that there might not be

be a dissenting Attribute in God, when this vote should passe, but the act of pardoning mercy might be carried clear, *nullo contradicente*. Therefore Christ, before he sollicitates the sinners cause with God, by request, performs first the other of satisfaction by sacrifice: He pays, and then prays, for what he hath paid: presenting his Petition in the behalf of believing sinners, written with his own blood, that so justice might not disdain to read or grant it. I will not dispute, whether God could, by a Prerogative mercy (without a satisfaction) have issued out an act of pardon; but in this way of satisfaction, the righteousness of God (I am sure) may be vindicated in the conscience of the greatest sinner on earth; yea, the Devil himself is but a faint Disputant, when faith pinches him with this Argument: 'tis a trench, which he is not able to climb. Indeed God laid our salvation in this method, that even we weak ones might be able to justify him, in justifying us, to the head of the most malicious devil in hell. Peruse that incomparable place, which hath balm enough in it, to heal the wounds of all the bleeding consciences in the world, where there is but faith to drop it in; and for ever to quench the fire of this darr, which is headed with the justice of God, Rom. 3. 24, 25, 26. *Being justified freely by his grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* O what work will faith make of this Scripture? a soul castled within these walls is impregnable; First, observe, Christ is here called a propitiation, or if you will, a propitiatory, ἰλαστήριον, alluding to the Mercy-seat, where God promised to meet his people, that he might converse with them, and no dread from his Majesty fall upon them, Exod. 25. Now, you know, the Mercy-seat was placed over the Ark, to be a cover thereunto, it being the Ark, wherein the holy Law of God was kept, from the violation of which, all the fears of a guilty soul arise; Therefore 'tis observable, that the dimensions of the one, were proportioned to the other; The Mercy-seat was to be as long, and broad to the full, as the Ark was; that no part thereof might be unshadowed by it; ver. 10. compared with ver. 17.

Thus,

Thus, *Christ* our true *Propitiatory*, covers all the Law, which else would come in to accuse the believer; but not one threatening now can arrest him, so long as this screen remains for faith to interpose, between Gods wrath and the soul. Justice now, hath no mark to level at; God cannot see the sinner for *Christ* that hides him. This is not the man (saith wrath) that I am to strike. See how he flies to *Christ*, and takes Sanctuary in his satisfaction, and so is got out of my walk and reach, that being a priviledged place, where I must not come to arrest any. It is usual, you know, in battels, to wear a *Ribband*, Handkerchief, or some such thing, to distinguish friends from foes. *Christ*s satisfaction worn by faith, is the sign that distinguisheth Gods friends from his enemies; The scarlet thread on *Rahabs* window, kept the destroying sword out of her house: and the blood of *Christ* pleaded by faith, will keep the soul from receiving any hurt at the hands of divine justice.

Secondly, observe, what hand *Christ* hath his Commission from, *whom God hath set forth, to be a propitiation through faith in his blood*. *Christ*, we see, is the great Ordinance of heaven; him the Father hath sealed; he is singled out from all others; Angels and men, and set forth as the person chosen of God, to make atonement for sinners, (as the *Lamb* was taken out of the flock, and set apart for the *Passover*.) When therefore Satan sets forth the believers sins in battel-array against him, and confronts him with their greatnesse; then faith runs under the shelter of this Castle, into the holes of this Rock. Surely (saith faith) my Saviour is infinitely greater than my greatest sins. I should impeach the wisdom of Gods choice, to think otherwise. God, who knew what a heavy burthen he had to lay upon his shoulders, was fully satisfied of his strength to bear it. He that refused sacrifice and burnt-offering for their insufficiency, would not have called him, had he not been all-sufficient for the work. Indeed, here lies the weight of the whole building; a weak faith may save, but a weak Saviour cannot; faith hath *Christ* to plead for it, but *Christ* hath none to plead for him; faith leans on *Christ*s arm; but *Christ* stood upon his own legs; and if he had sunk under the burthen of our sins, he had been past the reach of any creature in heaven or earth to help him up.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, observe the reason, why God chose this way of issuing out his *pardoning mercy*; and that is, *to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins*. Mark, not to declare his mercy, that is obvious to every eye. Every one will believe him merciful, that is forgiving; but to conceive, how God should be righteous in forgiving sinners, this lies more remote from the creatures apprehensions; and therefore it is ingeminated and repeated, ver. 26. *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*. As if God had said, I know why it seems so incredible (poor sinners) to your thoughts, that I should pardon all your iniquities, so great and many; you think, because I am a righteous God, that I will sooner damn a thousand worlds of sinners, than asperse my justice, and bring my name under the least suspicion of unrighteousness, and that thought is most true. I would indeed damn them over and over again, rather than stain the honour of my justice, which is my self; but I declare, yea, again I declare it, and command you, and the greatest sinners on earth upon pain of damnation to believe it; that I can be just, and yet the justifier of those sinners who believe in Jesus; O what boldness may the believer take at this news? methinks I see the soul, that was even now pining to death with despair, and lotting upon hell in his thoughts (as one already free among the dead) now revive and grow young again at these tidings; as *Jacob*, when he heard *Joseph* was alive: What? is justice (the only enemy I fear'd, and Attribute in Gods heart, which my thoughts fled from) now become my friend? then cheer up my soul, Who shall condemn, if God justifies? And how can God himself be against thee, when his very justice acquits thee?

SECT. V.

Object. But Satan will not thus leave the soul; Dost thou, poor creature, (saith he) believe this strange Divinity? Is it just for God to pardon thee for the satisfaction that another makes? one man commit the murder, and another man that is innocent hang'd for it; call you this just? the Law demands the person finning

sinning to be delivered up to justice; we finde no mention of a surety to be allowed by the Covenant, *in the day that thou eatest thou shalt die.*

Ans.

First, faith teaches the soul to acquiesce in the declaration that God makes of his own minde. Now though the threatening at first acquaints us with the sinners name only; yet faith findes a gracious relaxation of that threatening in the Gospel-Covenant; where to the believers everlasting comfort, God promisseth to accept the sinners debt at Christ's hand, whom therefore we finde arrested upon our action, *Esa. 53. 5. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.* Here is bottom strong enough for faith to rest on. And why should we (shallow creatures) ruffle Gospel truths, to the ensnaring our own thoughts, by thinking to fathom the bottomlesse depths of Gods justice, with the short cordage of our reason, which we see dunced by the meanest piece in Gods work of creation? faith spies a devil in this beautiful Serpent, Reason, which for its smooth tongue Satan useth on a mischievous designe to undermine, as other, so in particular, this one most sweet and fundamental truth of the Gospel, I meane the satisfaction of Christ; and therefore faith protests against the illegality of reasons court. What indeed bath reason to call before her lower bench these mysteries of our faith, that are purely supernatural, and so not under her cognizance? and O that those, in this proud age of ours, would consider it, who go to law (as I may so say) with the highest Gospel truths, before this *heathen Judge, Reason*; whereby they evacuate one great end of the Gospel, which is to sacrifice our shallow reason on this Altar, that so we might give the more signal honour to the truth of God, in believing the high mysteries of the Gospel upon his naked report of them in the Word, Reason with its little span cannot comprehend them.

Secondly, the believer can cleare God as just in receiving the debt at Christs hand, from that neer union that is betwixt Christ and his people. The husband may lawfully be arrested for his wives debt, because this union is voluntary; and it is to be supposed, he did, or ought to have considered what her estate was before he contracted so neer a relation to her. A suite may justly be commenced against a surety, because it was his own act

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to

to engage for the debt. To be sure, Christ was most free in engaging himself in the sinners cause. He knew what a sad plight mans nature was in; and he had an absolute freedom to please himself in his choyce; whether he would leave man to perish, or lend his helping hand towards his recovery; he had also an absolute power of his own life, which no meer creature hath; so that it being his own offer (upon his Fathers call) to take our nature in marriage, thereby to interest himself in our debt, and for the payment of it, to disburse and poure out his own precious blood to death, how dare proud flesh call the justice of God to the bar, and bring his righteousness in this transaction into question, for which God promised himself the highest expressions of love and thankfulness at his creatures hands?

Secondly, saith doel not only bear witnesse to the justice of God, that he may pardon a poor believing sinner and yet be just; but it shews that he may advance the honour of his justice by pardoning the believing soul, more than in damning the impenitent sinner. And surely God had no lesse designe in the Gospel-Covenant than this; he that would not the death of a sinner, but to vindicate his justice; would not certainly have consented to the death of his only Son, but for the higher advance, and further glorying of his justice in the eye of his creature: Christ saith, *he came not only, that we sinners might have life, but that we might have it more abundantly*, John 10. that is, more abundantly than we should have inherited it from innocent Adam. May we not therefore say, that Christ did not die, that God might only have his due debt, but that he might have it more abundantly payed by Christ, than he could have had it at the creatures hands? but more particularly the justice of God will appear here clothed with four glorious circumstances, that cannot be found in the payment which the sinner by his own personal sufferings makes unto it.

First, if we consider the person, at whose hand divine justice receives satisfaction. When the sinner is damned for his own sins, it is but a poor sorry creature that is punished, but when Christ suffereth, the debt is paid by a more honourable hand: God hath it from one that is near to himself, yea, equal with himself. *Make O sword against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts. Zech. 13. 7.* who will not say, a Judge.

Judge gives more eminent testimony of his justice, when he condemns his own Son, than when he arraigns a stranger? Here God indeed declared his utmost hatred to sinne, and inflexible love to justice, in that he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.

Secondly, if we consider the manner how the debt is paid, when the sinner is damned, it is in a poor beggarly way by retails; now a few pence, and then a few more, he is ever paying, but never comes to the last farthing, and therefore must for ever lye in prison for non-payment. But at Christs hands God receives all the whole debt in one lump, so that Christ could truly say, *It is finished*, John 19. 30. as much as if he had said, there are but a few moments, and the work of redemption will be finished. I have the summe now in my hand to pay God his whole debt, and as soon as I have bowed my head, and the breath is once out of my body, all will be finished. Yea, he hath his discharge for the receipt of the whole summe due to Gods justice, from the mouth of God himself, in which we finde him triumphing, *Esa. 53. 8. He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me?* yea, still more, Christ hath not only discharged the old debt, but by the same blood hath made a new purchase of God for his Saints. So that God, who was even now the creditor, is become the debtor to his creature, and that for no lesse than eternal life, which Christ hath paid for, and given every believer authority, humbly to claim of God in his name. See them both in one place, *Heb. 10. 13, 14, 15. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sinnes for ever, sate down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his foot-stools, for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.* He hath not only crossed the debt-book for believers, but perfected them for ever; that is, made as certain provision for their perfection in glory, as for their salvation from hells punishment. From which he exhorts them, *ver. 22. to draw near in full assurance of faith.* Let us not fear, but we shall receive at Gods hands, what Christ hath paid for.

Thirdly, when God dams the sinner, his justice indeed appears. Those condemned miscreants have not one righteous syllable to charge their Judge withall; but mercy is not seen to sit so glorious on the throne in this sentence pronounced on the sinner.

2.

3.

But when Christ suffered justice and mercy met, indeed justice appears never more orient in God or man, than when it is in conjunction with mercy. Now in the Lord Christ's death, they shone both in all their glory, and did mutually set off each the other. Here the white and the red, the roses and the lilies were so admirably tempered, that it is hard to say, which presents the face of justice most beautiful to our eye. Gods wrath upon Christ for us, or his mercy to us for his sake.

4. Fourthly, when God damns the sinner, justice is glorified only passively. God forceth his glory from Devils and damned souls; but they do not willingly pay the debt. They acknowledge God just, because they can do no other, but at the same time hate him; while they seeme to vindicate him; now in the satisfaction that Christ gives, justice is glorified actively, and that both from Christ, who was not dragged to the crosse, or haled to his sufferings, as the damned are to their prison and torment. *But gave himself for us, an offering, and a sacrifice to God, Ephes. 5. 2.* suffering as willingly for us, as ever we sinned against him. And also from believing souls, who now sing praises to the mercy and justice of God that redeemed them; and will for ever in heaven run division on the same note; now by how much the voluntary sufferings of Christ are better than the forced torments of the damned; and the chearful praises of Saints in heaven more melodious in Gods eare, than the extorted acknowledgements of damned souls in hell; by so much the justice of God is more glorified by Christs sufferings, than theirs. O what incomparable boldnesse may this send the soul withal to the throne of grace? who, when he is begging pardon for Christs sake, may without any hazard to his eternal salvation, say, *Lord, if my damnation will glorifie thy justice more, or so much as the death of Christ for me hath done, and the everlasting praises (which my thankful heart shall resound in heaven to the glory of all thy Attributes for my salvation) will do, let me have that rather than this.*

3. Thirdly, faith doth not only see justice preserved, yea, advanced in the act of pardoning mercy; but it will tell the soul, (and can make good what it saith) that God (as things now stand) cannot be just, if he doth not pardon the finnes of a repenting believing soul, how great soever they have been. One great part of justice consists

consists in a faithful and punctual performance of promises: he is, (we say) a just man, that keeps his word. And can God be a just God if he doth not? The word is gone out of his mouth, that he will forgive such. Yea, he is willing to be accounted just or unjust by us, as he makes performance thereof. See where he layes this his Attribute to pawn, upon this very account, 1. *John* 1. 9. *If we confesse our sinnes, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousnesse,* he doth not say *merciful*, but *just*; as the Attribute, which we most fear should vote against us; this he would have us know, is bound for the performance of the promise. It was mercy in God to make the promise; but justice to performe, what mercy hath promised, *Micah* 7. 20. *Thou wilt performe the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham,* God was not bound to make a promise to *Abraham* and his seed; but having once passed his Word to him, it was truth to *Jacob*, who was heire to that bond to which God had left in his Fathers hand.



CHAP. XX.

Faiths second Answer to Satans Argument, taken from the greatnesse of sinne, thereby to drive the soul to despair: where faith opposeth the greatnesse of the promises, against the greatnesse of the souls sinnes.

S*Secondly, faith quenches this temptation to despaire, drawn from the greatnesse of sinne, by opposing the greatnesse of the promises, to sinnes greatnesse; faith can only see God in his greatnesse; and therefore none but faith can see the promises in*

their greatnesse : because the value of promises is according to the worth of him that makes them : hence it comes to passe that promises have so little efficacy on an unbelieving heart, either to keep from sin, or to comfort under terror for sin. Promises are like the cloaths we wear ; which if there be heat in the body to warme them, then they will warme us : but, if they receive no heat from the body, they give none to it ; where there is faith to chafe the promise, there the promise will afford comfort and peace abundantly ; it will be as a strong cordial glowing with inward joy in the creatures bosom, but on a dead unbelieving heart, it lyes cold and ineffectual ; it hath no more effect on such a soul, than a cordial that is poured down a dead mans throat, hath on him. The promises have not comfort actually and formally as fire hath heat : then it were only going to them, and we should be warme, taking them up in our thoughts, and we should be comforted ; but virtually, as fire is in the flint, which requires some labour and Art to strike it out and draw it forth. Now none but faith can learn us this skill of drawing out the sweetnesse and vertue of the promise ; which it doth these three wayes among many others.

SECT. I.

First, faith leads the soul to the spring-head of the promise, where it may stand with best advantage, to take a view of their greatnesse and preciousnesse. Indeed we understand little of things, till we trace them to their originals, and can see them lying in their causes. Then a soul will know his sins to be great, when he sees them in their spring and source flowing from an invenom'd nature, that teemes with enmity against God. Then the sinner will tremble at the threatnings, which roul like thunder over his head, reddy to fall every moment in some judgement or other upon him ; when he sees from whence they are sent, the perfect hatred that God bears to sin, and infinite wrath with which he is inflamed against the sinner for it. In a word, then the poor trembling soul will not count the consolation, of the promises small, when it sees from what fountaine it flows, the bosome of Gods free mercy. This indeed is the Original source of all promises

mises. The Covenant it self, which comprehends them all is called *Mercy*, because the product of mercy, *Luke 1. 72. To performe the mercy promised to our Fathers, and to remember his holy Covenant.* Now, saith saith, if the promises flow from this sea of Gods free mercy, then they must needs be infinite as that is; boundlesse and bottomlesse, as that is; so that to reject the promise, or question the sufficiency of the provision made in it upon this account, because thy sins are great or many, casts a dishonorable reflection on that mercy, in whose womb the promise was conceived; and God will certainly bring his action of defamation against thee, for aspersing this his darling Attribute, which he can least endure to be slandered and traduced. God makes account you have done your worst against him, when once you report him to be unmerciful, or but scant in his mercy. How great a sin this is, may be conceived by the thoughts which God hath of this disposition and frame of spirit in his creature. An unmerciful heart, is such an abomination before the Lord, that it hath few like it. This lyes at the bottome of the heathens charge, as the sediment, and grossest part of all their horrid sins, *Rom. 1. 3. they were implacable, unmerciful.* Now, to attribute that to God, which he so abhors in his creature, must needs make a heart tender of the good name of God to tremble and exceedingly fear. It was a dreadful punishment God brought upon *Jehoram* King of *Judah*, *2 Chron. 21. 19. whom he smote in his bowels with an incurable disease, that after two years (torment) his very bowels fell out.* And why did this soare and heavy plague befall him? surely to let him know his want of bowels of mercy to his brethren and Princes, whom he most cruelly butchered. He had not bowels in his heart, and he therefore all have none in his body. Now darrest thou (saith saith) impute want of bowels to God, that he will not shew mercy to thee, who penitently seeks it in Christs Name; when thou seest what testimony he gives of his incensed wrath against those men, who have hardened their bowels against their brethren; yea, their enemies? O have a care of this. To shut thy own bowels of compassion from thy brother in need, is a grievous sinne, and brings it into question, whether the love of God dwells in thee. *1 John 3. 17.* But, to asperse the merciful heart of God, as if his bowels of compassion were shut against a poor soul in need, that desires to repent and returne, is transcendently
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the greater abomination, and puts it out of all question (where it is persisted in) that the love of God dwells not in him. It is impossible that love to God should draw such a mishapen portraiture of God as this is.

SECT. II.

Secondly, faith attends to the end of the promises, which gives a further prospect of their greatnesse. Now the Word, which is the light faith goes by, discovers a double end of promises, especially of the promise of pardoning mercy.

1. First, the exalting and magnifying the riches of free grace, which God would have appear in all its glory (so far I meane, as it is possible to be exposed to the creatures view, for the full sight of Gods glory is an object adequate to his own eye, and none else see this counsel and mysterious designe sweetly opened, *Ephes. chap. 1. ver. 6. 9, 11, 12.* The summes of all which, will amount to this; That God in himself hath taken up a purpose of pardoning, and saving a Company of poor lost sinners for Christs sake; and this he hath promulged in the promises of the Gospel; And the plot of all is, that he might gather these all together at last in heaven, some of which are already there, others of them at present on earth, and some yet unborn, and when they shall all meet together in one glorious quire there, that there they may by their triumphant songs, and Hallelujahs, fill the heavens with praisful acclamations of thankfulness to the glory of that mercy, which hath thus pardoned and saved them. Now, faith observing the praise of Gods mercy to be the end aimed at by him in the promise; comes with good news to the trembling soul, and tells it; that if God will be true to his own thoughts, and keep his eye on that mark, where at first he hath set it; impossible it is, that he should reject any poor penitent sinner, meerly for the greatnesse of the sinnes he hath committed. It is the exaltation of his mercy (saith faith) that God hath in his eye, when he promiseth pardon to poor sinners. Now, which exalts this most, to pardon little or great sinners? whose voyce will be highest and shrillest in the song of praise, thinkest thou? surely his, to whom most is forgiven; and therefore God cannot, but be most ready to pardon

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the greatest sinners, when truly penitent. A Physician that means to be famous, will not send away those that most need his skill and art; and only practise upon such diseases as are slight and ordinary. They are the great cures, which ring far and near: when one given over by himself and others, as a dead man, is by the skill and care of a Physician, rescued out of the jaws of death, that seem'd to have enclosed him, and raised to health; This commends him to all that hear of it, and gains him more reputation, than a whole years practice in ordinary cures. The great revenew of praise, is paid into Gods Exchequer from those who have had great sins pardoned; *He that hath five hundred pence forgiven, will love more than he that hath but fifty*, by Christ's own judgement, *Luk. 7. 43.* and where there is most love, there is like to be most praise; love and praise being symbolical, the one soon resolving into the other. The voice of a *Manasses*, a *Magdalen*, and a *Paul*, will be heard (as I may so say) above all the rest in heavens comfort. The truth is, greatness of sin, is so far from putting a bar to the pardoning of a penitent sinner in Gods thoughts; that he will pardon none (how little sinners soever they have been) except they see and acknowledge their sins to be great, before they come to him on such an errand. And therefore he useth the *Law*, to make way (by its convictions and terrours on the conscience) for his pardoning mercy, to ascend the throne in the penitent sinners heart, with the more magnificence and honour, *Rom. 5. 20.* *The Law entered* (that is, it was promulged at first by *Moses*, and is still preached) *that the offence might abound;* (that is, in the conscience, by a deeper sense and remorse) And why so? but that, *where sin abound'd, grace might much more abound.* We must needs shape our thoughts of the mercy that pardons our sins, suitable to the thoughts we frame to our selves of the sins we have committed; if we conceive these little, how can we think the other great? And if we tremble at the greatness of our sins, we must needs triumph and exult at the transcendency of the mercy, which so far exceeds their bulk and greatness. He that wonders at the height of some high mountain, would much more wonder at the depth of those waters, which should quite swallow and cover it from being seen.

The second end of the promise, is, the believers comfort. The

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Word,

Word, especially this part of it, was on purpose writ, *that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, they might have hope*, Rom. 15. 4. God was willing to give poor sinners all the security and satisfaction that might be, concerning the reality of his intentions and immutability of this counsel; which his mercy had resolved upon from eternity, for the saving of all those who would embrace Christ, and the terms offered through him in the Gospel; which that he might do, he makes publication thereof in the Scripture, where he opens his very heart, and exposeth the purposes of his love, (that from everlasting he had taken up, for the salvation of poor sinners) to their own view, in the many precious promises (that run like veins throughout the whole body of the Scriptures) & these with all the seals & ratifications, which either his wisdom could find, or mans jealous unbelieving heart desire. And all this, on a design to 'silence the querulous spirit of poor tempted souls, and make their life more comfortable; who, pursued by the hue and cry of their high-climbing sins, take sanctuary for their lives in Christ Jesus. As we have it, *in totidem verbis*, Heb. 6. 18. *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope that is set before us.* And because that this, of the greatnesse and multitude of the creatures sins, is both the heaviest millstone, which the devil can find, to tye about the poor sinners neck, in order to the drowning him in despair; and that knife also, which is oftneft taken up by the tempted sinners own hands for the murdering his faith; therefore the more frequent and abundant provision is made by God against this; or, read for this purpose these choice of Scriptures, *Exod.* 34. 5. *Jer.* 3. the whole chapter. *Isa.* 1. 18. *Isa. ch.* 55. 7, 8, 9, and 21. *Heb.* 7. 25. *Epist.* 1 *Joh.* 1. 9. These, and such like places, are the strong holds which faith retreats into, when this battery is raised against the soul. Canst thou for shame be graveld (saith faith, O my soul) with an argument drawn meerly from the greatness of thy sins? which is answered in every page almost in the Bible, and to confute which, so considerable a part of Scripture was writ? Thus faith hisseth Satan away with this his argument, (that he counts so formidable) as they would do a wrangling Sophister out of the Schools, when he boldly and ridiculously denies some known principle, acknowledged by all.

all for a truth, that have not lost their wits. But, I would not be here mistaken; God forbid, that while I am curing despair, I should cause presumption in any. These two distempers of the soul, are equally mortal and dangerous, and so contrary, that like the cold stomach, and the hot liver in the same person, while the Physician thinks to help nature in the one, to a heat, for digesting its food, he sometimes unhappily kindles a fire in the other, that destroys nature it self. Thus, while we labour to cheer the drooping souls spirits, and strengthen him to retain and digest the promise for his comfort, we are in danger of nourishing that feverish heat of presumptuous confidence, which is a fire, will soon eat out all care to please, and fear to displease God, and consequently all ground of true faith in the soul. Faith and fear, being like the natural heat, and radical moisture in the body, which is never well, but when both are preserved, *The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear him, and hope in his mercy.* Let me therefore caution thee Christian: As thou meanest to find any relief from the mercy of God in a day of distresse: Take heed thou dost not think to befriend thy self with hopes of any favour thou mayest find from it, though thou continuest thy friendship with thy lusts. A design as infeasible, as to reconcile light and darknesse, and bring day to dwell with night. Thou needest not indeed fear, to believe the pardon of thy sins (if thou repentest of them) meerly because they are great; but tremble to think of sinning boldly, because the mercy of God is great. Though mercy be willing to be a sanctuary to the trembling sinner, to shelter him from the curse of his sin; yet it disdains to spread her wing over a bold sinner, to cover him while he is naught with his lust. What? sin because there are promises of pardon, and these promises made by mercy, which as far exceeds our sins, as God doth the creature? Truly, this is the *Antipodes* to the meaning, that Gods mercy had in making them, and turns the Gospel with its heels upwards. As if your servant should get to your cellar of strong waters, and with them make himself drunk, which you keep for them, when sick or faint, and then only to be used. O take heed of quaffing thus in the bowls of the Sanctuary. It is the sad soul, not the sinning, that this wine of consolation belongs to.

SECT. III.

3. Faith presents the Christian with a cloud of witnesses, to whom the Promise hath been fulfilled, and these as great sinners as himself is. Scripture-examples are Promises verified. They are book-cases, which faith may make use of by way of encouragement, as well as Promises. God would never have left the Saints great blots to stand in the Scriptures, to the view of the world in all succeeding generations, had not it been of such use and advantage to tempted souls, to choke this temptation, which of all other makes the most dangerous breach in their souls, so wide sometimes, that despair it self is ready to enter in at it. Blessed *Paul* gives this very reason, why such acts of pardoning mercy to great sinners are recorded, *Eph. 2.* he shews, First, what foul filthy creatures, himself and other believers contemporary with him, were, before they were made partakers of Gospel-grace, *ver. 3.* *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of the flesh;* and then he magnifies the rich mercy of God, that rescued and took them out of that damned desperate state, *v. 4.* *But, God who was rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us in Christ.* And why must the world know all this? O, God had a design and plot of mercy to more than themselves in them, *v. 7.* *That in the ages to come, he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus,* *ver. 7.* where-ever the Gospel comes, this shall be spoken of, what great sins he had forgiven to them, that unbelief might have her mouth stopt to the end of the world; and this arrow, which is so oft on Satans string, might be made headless and harmless. God commanded *Joshua* to take twelve Stones out of the midst of *Jordan*, and set them up; and observe the reason, *ver. 6, 7.* *That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, What mean you by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off, and these stones shall be a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.* Thus,

Thus, God hath by his pardoning mercy, taken up some great notorious sinners out of the very depths of sin, who lay at the very bottome, as it were, of hell; swallowed up, and ingulph't in all manner of abomination; and these he hath set up in his Word, that when any poor tempted souls, to the end of the world, (who are even overwhelmed with fears, from the greatnesse of their finnes) shall see and read what God hath done for these, they may be relieved and comforted with these examples, by God intended to be as a memorial of what he hath done for others in time past; so a sign, what he can still do, yea will, for the greatest sinners (to the worlds end) upon their repentance and faith. No finnes, though as great and many as the waters of *Jordan* themselves, shall be able to stand before the mercy of Gods gracious Covenant, but shall all be cut off, and everlastingly pardoned to them. O who can read a *Manasseh*, a *Magdalene*, a *Saul*; yea an *Adam*, (who undid himself, and a whole world with him) in the Roll of pardoned sinners, and yet turn away from the promise, out of a fear that there is not mercy enough in it, to serve his turn? These are as Land-marks, that shew what large boundaries mercy hath set to it self, and how far it hath gone; even to take into its pardoning armes, the greatest sinners, that make not themselves incapable thereof by final impenitency. It were a healthful walk (poor doubting Christian) for thy soule, to go this circuit, and oft to see where the utmost stone is laid, and boundary set by Gods pardoning mercy, further than which he will not go. That thou mayest not turn in the stone, to the prejudice of the mercy of God by thy own unbelief, nor suffer thy self to be abused by Satans lyes, who will make nothing to remove Gods Land-mark, (if he may, by it, but encrease thy trouble of spirit) though he be cursed for it himself. But if after all this, thy finnes seem to exceed the proportion of any one, thou canst find pardoned in Scripture, (which were strange) yet faith at this plunge hath one way left beyond all these examples for thy soules succour, and that is to fix thy eye on Christ, who though he never had sin of his own, yet laid down his life to procure and purchase pardon for all the elect, and hath obtained it, (they are all, and shall as they come upon the stage, be pardoned.) Now, saith faith, suppose thy sins were greater than any one Saints; yet are they as great.

great as all the sins of the elect together? thou dar'st not surely say, or think so. And, cannot Christ procure thy pardon, who art but a single person, that hath done it for so many millions of his elect? yea, were thy sins as great as all theirs are, the summe would be the same; and God could forgive it, if it lay in one heap, as well as now, when it is in several. Christ is the Lamb, that takes away the sin of the world, Joh. 1. 29. See here, all the sins of the elect world truss'd up in one fardel, and he carries it lightly away into the land of forgetfulness. Now faith will tell thee, poor soul, that the whole virtue and merit of Christs blood, by which the world was redeemed, is offered to thee, and shall be communicated to thy soul in particular; Christ doth not retail and parcel out his blood, and the purchase of it; some to one, and some to another, (then thou might'st say something) but he gives his whole self to the faith of every believer. All is yours, you are Christs. O, what mayest thou not, poor soul, take up from the Promise, upon the credit of so great a Redeemer?



CHAP. XXI.

Faiths third Answer to Satans Argument, wringing the soul to despair. Where faith opposeth the greatness of this one sin of despair, to the greatnesse of the rest.

3.

THirdly, faith to quench this fiery dart, headed with the greatness of sin, and shot by Satan to drive the poor and penitent soul to despair, teacheth him to oppose, the greatnesse of this one sin of despair, to the greatnesse of all his other sins: What, saith faith, would Satan perswade thee, because thou hast been

been so great and prodigious a sinner, therefore not to believe, or dare to think the Promise hath any good newes for thee? retort thou, O my soul, his Argument upon himself, and tell him, That very thing, by which he would dissuade thee from believing, doth much more deterre thee from despairing; and that is the greatness of this sin above all thy other. Grant to be true what he chargeth thee withal, that thou art such a monster in sin as he sets thee forth, (though thou hast no reason to think so, upon his bare report, but yield him his saying) dost thou think to mend the matter, or better thy condition by despairing? Is this all the kindnesse he will shew thee, to make thee of a great sinner, a desperate sinner like himself? This indeed is the only way he can think of, to make thee worse than thou art; and that this is true, faith is able to prove by these four considerations of this bloody horrid sin, which will easily evince more malignity to be in this one sin of despair, than in any other, yea, all other together.

SECT. I.

Despair opposeth God in the greatest of all his commands. The greatest command without all compare in the whole Bible, is to believe: when those Jewes asked our Lord Jesus, *John 6. 28. What shall we do, that we might work the Works of God?* mark his answer, *v. 29. This is the Work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* As if he had said, the most compendious way, that I am able to give you, is to receive me into your hearts by faith; do this, and you do all in one. *This is the work, that is in fact omnium,* all you do is undone, and your selves also, will this work be done, for which you shall have as much thanks at Gods hands, as if you could keep the whole Law; indeed it is accepted in lieu of it. *Unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,* Rom. 4. 5. where, *he that worketh not,* is not meant a slothful lazy sinner, that hath no list to work; nor a rebellious sinner, whose heart riseth against the work, which the holy Law of God would employ him in; but the humbled sinner, who desires
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and endeavours to work, but is no way able to do the task, the Law as a Covenant sets him; and therefore is said in a *law-sense*, not to work, because he doth not work to the Laws purpose, so as to answer its demands, which will accept nothing short of perfect obedience; this mans faith on Christ is accepted for righteousness; that is, God reckons him so, and so he shall pass at the great day by the Judges sentence, as if he had never trod one step awry from the path of the Law. Now, if faith be the work of God above all other, then unbelief is the work of the devil, and that, which he had rather thou shouldst do, than drink or drab; and despair is unbelief at the worst; unbelief among sins, is as the plague among diseases, the most dangerous; but when it riseth to despair, then it is as the plague with the tokens appearing, that bring the certain message of death with them. Unbelief is despair in the bud, despair is unbelief at its full growth.

SECT. II.

2.

Secondly, despair hath a way peculiar to itself, of dishonouring God above other sins. Every sin wounds the Law, and the Name of God through the Laws sides. But this wound is healed, when the penitent sinner by faith comes to Christ and closeth with him. God makes account, reparations now are fully made (through Christ, whom the believer receives) for the wrong done to his Law, and his Name vindicated from the dishonour cast upon it by the creatures former iniquities; yea, that it appears more glorious, because it is illustrious, by the shining forth of one title of honour, (not the least prized by God himself) his forgiving mercy, which could not have been so well known to the creature, if not drawn forth into act upon this occasion. But, what would you say of such a prodigious sinner, that when he hath wounded the Law, is not willing to have it healed? when he hath dishonoured God, and that in an high provoking manner, is not willing the dirt he hath cast on Gods face, should be wiped off? methinks I see every one of your choler to rise at the reading of this, against such a wretch, and hear you asking,

as once *Ahashuerus* did *Eſther*, *Who is he, and where is he, that durſt preſume in his heart to do ſo?* *Eſther* 7. 5. Would you know? Truly the Adverſary and enemy is this wicked *Deſpair*. The deſpairing ſoul is the perſon that will not let Chriſt make ſatisfaction for the wrong, that by his ſins he hath done God. Suppose a man ſhould wound another dangerously in his paſſion, and when he hath done, will not let any Chyrurgion come near to cure the wound he hath made. Every one would ſay, his laſt act of cruelty was worſe than his firſt. O my ſoul (ſaith ſaith) thou didſt ill, yea, very ill, in breaking the holy Laws of God, and diſhonouring the Name of the great God of heaven and earth thereby; let thy heart ake for this. But thou doſt far worſe by thy deſpairing of mercy. In this act thou rejeſteſt Chriſt, and keepeſt him off from ſatisfying the juſtice of the Law that is injured by thee, and from redeeming the honour of his Name from the reproach thy ſins have ſcandalized it with. What language ſpeaks thy deſpair, but this? Let God come by his right and honour as he can, thou wilt never be an inſtrument active in the helping of him to it, by believing on Chriſt, in whom he may fully have them with advantage. O what ſhame would deſpair put the mercy of God to in the ſight of Satan his worſt enemy? He claps his hands at this, to ſee all the glorious Attributes of God ſerved alike, and diveſted of their honour. This is meat and drink to him. That curſed ſpirit deſires no better muſick, than to hear the ſoul ring the Promiſes, like bells, backward; make no other uſe of them, than to confirm it in its own deſperate thoughts of its damnation, and to tell it, hell-fire is kindled in its conſcience, which no mercy in God, will or can quench to eternity. As the bloody *Jews* and *Roman* ſouldiers, exerciſed their cruelty on every part almoſt of Chriſts body, crowning his head with thorns, goring his ſide with a ſpear, and faſtning his hands and feet with nails: So the deſpairing ſinner deals with the whole Name of God. He doth, as it were, put a mock-crown on the head of his wiſdom, ſetting it all to naught, and charging it fooliſhly, as if the method of ſalvation was not laid with prudence by the all-wiſe God. He nails the hands of his Almighty power; while he thinks his ſins are of that nature, as put him out of the reach, and beyond the power of God to ſave him. He pierceth the tender bowels of God through his mercy,

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of which he cannot see enough in a God, (that not only hath, but is mercy and love it self) to perswade him to hope for any favour or forgiveness at his hands. In a word, the despairing soul transfixeth his very heart and will, while he unworthily frames notions of God, as if he were unwilling to the work of mercy, and not so enclined to exercise acts of pardon and forgiveness on poor sinners, as the Word declares him. No, despair basely mis-reports him to the soul, as if he were a lame God, and had no feet (affections I mean) to carry him to such a work as forgiving sin is. Now what does the sum of all this amount to, (if you can without horror and amazement stand to cast it up, and consider the weight of those circumstances which aggravate the flagitiousness of this unparallel'd fact) surely it riseth to no lesse than the highest attempt that the creature can make for the murdering of God himself; for the infinitude of Gods Wisdom, Power, Mercy, and all his Attributes, are more intrinsecal to the essence and being of God, than the heart-blood is to the life of a mortal man? Shall he that lets out the heart-blood of a man, yea, but attempts to do it, be a murderer, (especially if he be a Prince or a King the design is against) and deservedly suffer as such a one? and shall not he much more be counted and punished, as the worst of all murderers, that attempts to take away the life of God, (though his arm and dagger be too short for the purpose) by taking from him in his thoughts, the infinitude of those Attributes, which are (as I may say) the very life of God? Surely God will neither part with the glory, nor suffer the dishonour of his Name, at the hands of his sorry creature; but will engage all his Attributes for the avenging himself on the wretch that attempts it. O tremble therefore at despair. Nothing makes thy face gather blacknesse, and thy soul hasten faster to the complexion of damned souls, than this; now thou sinnest after the similitude of those that are in hell.

SECT. III.

3.

Thirdly, despair strengthens and enrageth all other sins in the soul. None fight so fiercely, as those who look for no quarter. They think themselves dead men, and therefore they will sell their

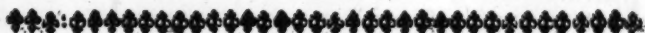
their lives as dear as they can. *Sampson* despaired ever getting out of the *Philistines* hands, (his eyes being now lost, and he unfit to make an escape) what doth he meditate, now his case is desperate, but his enemies ruine, though it costs him his own? He cares not, though he pulls the house on his own head, so it may but fall on the *Philistines* also. *Absalom*, when by the cursed counsel of *Achitophel*, he had (as he thought) made himself so hateful to *David*, as to put him past all hope of being treated with, then breaks out with an high rage, and seeks the ruine of his Royal father with fire and sword. So cruel a thing is despair, it teaches to shew no respect where it looks for none. But most clearly it appears in the Devil himself, who knowing himself to be excepted from pardon, sins with a rage as high as heaven; and the same sin hath the same effects in men, that it hath in the devil, according to the degrees of it that are found in them, *Jer. 18. 11, 12. They said there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices.* Did you never see a sturdy beggar, (after a while knocking at a door, and concluding by the present silence, or denial, that he shall have nothing given him) fall into a cursing and railing of them that dwell there? even such foul language doth despair learn the sinner to belch out against the God of heaven; if despair enters, it is impossible to keep blasphemy out; pray therefore, and do thy utmost to repel this dart, lest it soon set thy soul on a flame with this hell-fire of blasphemy. Hear O you souls smitten for sin, that spend your lives in sighs, sobs and tears, for your horrid crimes past; would you again be seen fighting against God as fierce as ever? as you would not, take heed of despair. If thou once thinkest that Gods heart is hardened against thee, thy heart will not be long hardening against him. And this (by the way) may administer comfort to the thoughts of some gracious, but troubled souls, who can find no faith that they have; yea, who are oft reckoning themselves among despairers. Let me ask thee, who art in this sad condition, this one thing, Canst thou find any love breathing in thy heart towards God, though thou canst find no breath of love coming at present from him to thee? and art thou tender and fearful of sinning against him, even while thou seemest to thy own thoughts to hope for no mercy from him? if so, be of good comfort; thy faith may be weak, but thou art far from being under the power of despair; desperate souls do not use to reserve any

love for God, or care for the pleasing of him. There is some faith surely in thy soul, which is the cause of these motions, though (like the spring in a watch) it be it self unseen, when the other graces moved by it are visible.

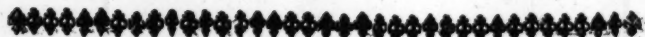
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4.

The greatnesse of this sin of despair appears in this, that the least sin invenom'd by it, is unpardonable; and without this, the greatest is pardonable. That must needs of all sins be most abominable, which makes the creature incapable of mercy. *Judas* was not damn'd merely for his treason and murder; for others, that had their hands deep in the same horrid fact, obtained a pardon, by faith in that blood which through cruelty they shed; but they were these, heightned into the greatest malignity possible, from the putrid stiffe of despair and final impenitency, with which his wretched heart was filled, that he died so miserably of, and now is infinitely more miserably damned for.



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